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President: Mr. Lajčák .... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 132 (*continued*)

The responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/884)

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): For Germany, the responsibility to protect is of special importance. It is a priority for us and I am therefore very pleased that we have the opportunity to speak first this afternoon. I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's debate, and to pay tribute to Australia and Ghana, which have been the driving force behind this topic and putting it on our agenda. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/72/884) and for his inspiring speech this morning (see A/72/PV.99). Much has been said about the responsibility to protect, and I will therefore be brief and make just six short points.

I would first like to align myself with the statements made this morning by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Qatar (see A/72/PV.99), who spoke on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect, of which we are a member.

Secondly, many of this morning's speakers discussed conflict prevention, and I listened very carefully, for instance, to the former President of Kiribati, who highlighted the issue (see A/72/PV.99). I think that it is key to the debate on the responsibility to protect. In other words, we must ensure that we go from early warning to early action. For Germany that is a key aspect of the responsibility to protect, and we have therefore been prioritizing it at the United Nations. We also believe that the Security Council should feature conflict prevention on its agenda far more often than it does, and when Germany assumes its seat on the Council, starting on 1 January 2019, we will have conflict prevention on our agenda too.

Thirdly, within the family of the United Nations, the offices that deal with conflict prevention must assume a more important role, and we have to pay more attention to this. For us, the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect is key in that regard, but in the broader sense of conflict prevention so are the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund. All these institutions are crucial to promoting conflict prevention and deserve our support. In that context, I would also like to highlight and once again commend the President of the Assembly, who has put conflict prevention and, in particular, sustaining peace — where conflict prevention plays a very important role — on the agenda during this session. That has been one of the most important efforts of his presidency.

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Many speakers have emphasized my fourth point, which is that the primary responsibility for the responsibility to protect lies with Member States. In his statement this morning, the Secretary-General said that the principle's first pillar refers to the primary responsibility of States to protect all populations within their territory from atrocity crimes. If a country is to assume that responsibility, it must build resilience — resilience against violations of human rights and against mass atrocities and ethnic cleansing. In that regard, I would like to cite my colleague from Ghana, one of the founding members of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect, who insisted that in order to build resilience we need functional institutions of good governance at all levels (see A/72/PV.99). That includes a robust human rights regime, inclusiveness and respect for diversity and the rule of law, with a strong judiciary.

Fifthly, to return to inclusiveness, for that, civil society must play a strong role. It has the closest links to the people. The members of civil society know what is happening in their country and they may also be in a position to give the earliest indications when something is going wrong. To refer once again to my colleague from Ghana, she said that collaboration with civil society as a strategic partner in the implementation of the responsibility to protect is very important to her country. I therefore think that the debates that we are having on the responsibility to protect here at the United Nations would also benefit from the inclusion of representatives of civil society, if possible, and I would like to make a general appeal to that effect to the Secretary-General, as well as to all the various agencies and offices. This week we are holding a high-level conference of heads of counter-terrorism agencies on 28 June, but unfortunately here at the United Nations civil-society organizations were excluded from that discussion.

With regard to my last point, which is about accountability, if we are to prevent mass atrocities, mechanisms for accountability must be in place. We have to ensure that we establish an environment in which no one who commits a crime against humanity or mass atrocities can even think about going free. Such people must feel that they will have to constantly be looking over their shoulders for the rest of their lives, and they must fear being caught. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to plead for support and cooperation with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. If prevention fails in Syria or Myanmar, as we have seen, we need accountability.

I thank the President of the General Assembly once again for putting this item on the agenda.

Ms. Núñez Rivas (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement (see A/72/PV.99) on an issue that is so important to the international community. I would also like to express my country's appreciation for the leadership role that Australia and Ghana have undertaken, which has proved invaluable in incorporating the responsibility to protect into this session of the General Assembly, and to say that we hope to see the issue become a permanent item on its agenda.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Friends for the Responsibility to Protect (see A/72/PV.99), and I would also like to make some comments on issues of importance for us.

Uruguay once again affirms its firm commitment to the responsibility to protect. In that regard, we want to highlight its first and second pillars, on prevention, in the understanding that force should only ever be used as a last resort and should always comply with all the assurances enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including the express consent of the Security Council. We therefore advocate a preventive, comprehensive and holistic approach and welcome the Secretary-General's most recent report, entitled "The responsibility to protect: from early warning to early action" (A/72/884), in which he stresses that the effective prevention of atrocity crimes must be placed in a broader context of the international community's efforts to prevent crises and suffering.

States are primarily responsible for protecting their peoples and for ensuring that human rights are respected within their borders. They must also ensure that the perpetrators of such heinous crimes are investigated, held accountable and prosecuted. Accountability is important not only in combating impunity and injustice but also in functioning as a deterrent. In that belief, Uruguay was the first country in Latin America to fully implement the Rome Statute of the International

Criminal Court in its domestic legislation and therefore appeals to all States that have not yet done so to become party to the Statute and cooperate fully with the Court. I would also like to underscore that the prevention of atrocities is most effective when national, regional and global actors work in a coordinated and cooperative manner. Uruguay is a member of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect and is part of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points, as well as the Latin American Network for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention. These initiatives strengthen national and regional preventive capacities and help us to foster confidence-building among States.

I should also highlight the importance of international, regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention, in addition to the role of peacekeeping operations as an effective tool in preventing atrocity crimes. Peacekeeping operations help to prevent or mitigate abuses by States or rebel groups and are effective early-warning instruments for possible violations of human rights and other crimes. As a troop-contributing country, Uruguay adheres to the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians and therefore supports the importance of conducting predeployment training programmes on the effective protection of civilians so that contingents are properly equipped before being deployed in the field.

It is especially important to ensure that the Security Council, which according to the Charter bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, spares no effort and provides effective measures to protect the civilian population, including by referring cases to the International Criminal Court when appropriate. As a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, Uruguay supports its code of conduct for Council resolutions relating to the protection of populations against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and we urge States that have not yet done so to join that initiative. We also support France and Mexico's proposed political declaration on the suspension of the veto powers of the permanent members of the Security Council in cases of mass atrocity.

In conclusion, the effective implementation of the responsibility to protect requires a complementary approach, including concerted action among States, cooperation with the Security Council, the Human Rights Council, the International Criminal Court and the various United Nations agencies and collaboration with global and regional organizations, as well as civil society. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and the other non-governmental organizations that work valiantly to ensure that the principles of the responsibility to protect and the protection of human rights are implemented.

The reality of the twenty-first century has shown us a world convulsed by violations of the most basic human rights perpetrated by both armed groups and States. These are crimes that are carried out in total contempt for human life. Only concerted efforts on the part of all actors can enable us to continue strengthening the consensus on the responsibility to protect and bring relief to the millions of innocent human beings who are suffering.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation has considered the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/72/884. We reaffirm that no Member State can reject or contest in principle some of the report's contents about the basic responsibility of States to protect their citizens, and about promoting the systems related to early warning and early action aimed at preventing genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. However, there are reasons for concern that have been expressed by several Member States, specifically about the fact that some Member States, in coordination with members of the Secretariat, have taken an unprofessional and exclusionary approach in order to exploit the responsibility to protect and politicize it in a way that makes it subject to controversy in the work of the United Nations.

We are not here today to make a political statement or teach anyone a lesson, but we intend to speak transparently and clearly about the realities, events, disastrous consequences and grave crimes that the Governments of certain States have perpetrated, violating principles of international law and unilaterally exploiting the concept of the responsibility to protect without a United Nations mandate and so as to interfere in the affairs of some States, selectively and unjustifiably.

As a founding and responsible member of this Organization, the Syrian Arab Republic would like to remind all Member States that one of the reports of former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon clearly mentioned the serious concerns raised by the issue of some Governments' misuse of the concept of the responsibility to protect and their application of it to a particular State. Needless to say, for the past eight years that State, which is a member of our international Organization, has been enduring a disastrous situation. As a result, we have seen destruction, chaos and the deaths of thousands of its innocent citizens thanks to military operations and aerial bombardments by the armies of Governments that claim to be applying the concept of the responsibility to protect by perpetrating acts of murder, destruction and looting. Need we also add that this same State has been enduring a terrifying situation involving terrorism, fighting and struggles for power. Tens of thousands of its citizens, as well as the citizens of States in Africa, have lost their lives in their attempt to escape the scourge of war, drowning in the Mediterranean Sea. What kind of responsibility to protect is it when thousands are killed, States are destroyed and their peoples displaced under its pretext?

The preparers of the Secretary-General's latest report insist on flagrantly ignoring the fact that the criteria and assurances that Member States apply in implementing the concept of the responsibility to protect differ greatly. They also ignore the objective criticisms that many Member States have made about the lack of assurances and restrictions that can ensure that the responsibility to protect is not used as a justification for violating States' sovereignty and interfering in their internal affairs, which, as we all know, have occurred in numerous places.

The Secretariat and some Member States are still trying to use the 2005 World Summit Outcome document to create a fictional legal basis for the responsibility to protect. In that regard, my country and many other Member States believe that paragraphs 138 and 139 of resolution 60/1 do not establish the responsibility to protect as a principle. Rather, they underscore basic and inherent principles behind the purposes of the United Nations relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, the resolve to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to have faith in fundamental human rights and the dignity of human beings, to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and above all to respect the sovereignty of States and refrain from interfering in their internal affairs. What does all of this mean? It means that the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter are above the concept of the responsibility to protect, especially since the concept itself is a controversial one and has not yet been adopted as such by Member States.

Syria, together with many other Member States, calls on the Secretariat and the Governments of States that are striving to establish this principle as a standing item on the General Assembly agenda to show courage and admit that Member States differ substantially on this concept. They must have a transparent discussion of the genuine sources of concerns about it and admit that the United Nations has been unable to undertake its real responsibility to protect the Palestinian people from the Israeli occupation and its supporters. They must recognize that the United Nations has shown itself unable to implement an early-warning system for protecting Iraqis and Syrians from the acts of Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and other terrorist organizations. They must acknowledge that the United Nations has failed to create international systems for early alerts and cooperation in order to confront the aspect of international terrorism known as foreign terrorist fighters, which some Governments and intelligence services have helped to create.

They must also recognize that the United Nations has been unable to undertake its responsibility to protect by addressing the crimes of the illegitimate United States-led international coalition against the Syrian people. According to United Nations reports, those crimes have destroyed the cities of Raqqa and Ayn Al-Arab. They have killed thousands of civilians in Syria and they say that all of that is collateral damage — that destroying cities, killing thousands and looting monuments are collateral damage. Infrastructure, bridges and electric and hydro-power plants have all been destroyed as a result of collateral damage on the pretext of fighting terrorism. When the Secretariat and the Governments of the States that promote the responsibility to protect in this exclusionary and selective way admit that these consequences are part of a failure on the part of the United Nations to respect and implement every one of the principles and provisions of the Charter, without exception, then we in Syria, along with many other Member States that stand ready to respect the principles of freedom, justice and equality in word and deed, are ready to sit down with them at one table and discuss the concept of the responsibility to protect in a transparent way.

At that point, we will be willing to discuss the issue of including this concept on the General Assembly agenda and to reach a consensus on the concept itself, as well as on its content and the assurances that can ensure that it is not used for political objectives that run counter to the principles and purposes of the United Nations and its Charter. Without that, we would be dealing with a bad situation marked by the political hypocrisy and immorality that have undermined the credibility of this international Organization ever since the invasion of Iraq. We would also be dealing with parties that are unwilling to defend human rights anywhere in the world, because they are using humanitarian issues to justify their intrusions into the affairs of other States and disguise their military aggressions against them as legitimate actions.

Speaking of political hypocrisy and immorality, and in response to certain delegations regarding the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, I would say that we cannot separate legal responsibility and moral principles, since otherwise they would be characterized as hypocritical. I would also say that anything built on falsehood is false. In that regard, I would like to remind the Assembly that this illegal Mechanism was based on General Assembly resolution 71/248, which was not adopted by consensus and was the outcome of an illegal operation and procedure in which the Assembly went beyond its mandate. The resolution blatantly infringes on the purview and mandates of the Security Council, as outlined in Article 12 of the Charter, and the General Assembly has therefore created an illegal mechanism and granted it investigative powers that it does not itself possess.

My delegation and some other Member States have sent several letters to the Secretary-General and to representatives of the Member States in which we have proved beyond any discussion or doubt that this Mechanism is illegal. It was born dead and will stay that way.

I would ask my colleagues to always remember that the Government behind this illegitimate Mechanism is the Government of a country — I am not using the word "regime", because it would be shameful for a diplomat to use that under the dome of the United Nations, the dome of international legitimacy — whose previous Prime Minister declared publicly that the ruling family in his country supports and finances the Al-Nusra Front, which is classified as a terrorist organization by the Security Council. The Government of another country also launders money through illegal operations carried out by its financial institutions, selling oil and gas and then financing armed terrorist groups in my country, Syria.

Given all of this, do member States think that supporting this Mechanism can be considered a moral action? Some members here in this Hall should be their own judges with regard to the use of double standards and selectivity. There is no need to remind them that they are failing to fight terrorism and are deliberately turning a blind eye to the flow of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters to Syria.

In conclusion, I want to remind the Assembly that for an entire year the Security Council was unable to include a terrorist entity called Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham — the Organization for the Liberation of the Levant — on the list of terrorist organizations. Why? Because the United States delegation was against that. On the sidelines of a review of the United Nations counter-terrorism strategy, during the informal meetings that took place a few days ago, that same delegation, that is, the American delegation, rejected the inclusion of any reference in the text of any draft resolution to be adopted by the General Assembly to fighting the promotion of violent extremism on Internet networks. Why? The justification was that this goes against freedom of expression. Fighting the spread of extremism and terrorism on Internet networks is contradictory, in their opinion, to freedom of expression and speech.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the President for having convened this formal debate on the responsibility to protect, which is a priority for Peru. We are also particularly grateful for the Secretary-General's report in this regard (A/72/884).

This formal debate comes after nine years of informal interactive dialogue and represents a further step towards the consolidation of a principle that is inherent in the promotion and protection of human rights and closely linked to the obligations undertaken by the Peruvian Government. We reaffirm our commitment to the principle of its three pillars, starting with the recognition of the fact that the responsibility to protect falls primarily on States, with the objective of strengthening rather than undermining their sovereignty.

Peru is committed to international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We are party to the key international instruments in both areas, whose provisions are duly reflected, developed and implemented in our domestic legislation. In this connection, during our current term in the Security Council, we are according a high priority to its responsibility to protect civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law. We feel compelled to express our deep regret and concern about the impunity with which international humanitarian law is being violated today, in many cases without the Security Council living up to its responsibilities.

We want to emphasize, therefore, that it is the moral and legal obligation of the members of the Council to act with unity to put an end to the suffering that for various reasons afflicts millions of people in countries such as Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Somalia, the Central African Republic, Libya and Palestine. In that connection, we want to underscore that 116 States, including Peru, have signed a code of conduct that commits us to act in a timely and decisive manner to prevent and put an end to atrocity crimes.

Here we reiterate that the sovereignty of each State should be understood to include the primary responsibility for the protection of its population and that, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, when national authorities fail to protect their populations, the international community must shoulder that responsibility.

Peru also highlights the fact that a number of peacekeeping operations deployed by decision of the Security Council have mandates to protect civilians, including ones in which Peru's own army is involved. However, all States must abide by international humanitarian law and train their armed forces to that end. Peru has adopted various initiatives in this regard, reflected in the impeccable performance of our troops deployed in several peacekeeping operations.

We emphasize that the most effective way to protect is through prevention. In this regard, we underscore the importance of understanding that sustainable peace is a lasting objective, focused on human beings and on the institutions and processes required to prevent or resolve violent conflicts.

Here we also want to highlight the Secretary-General's report, which focuses on how to improve early-warning mechanisms and achieve a rapid transition to early action. It is important to strengthen existing preventive capacities and promote mechanisms for genuine accountability. Among other things, this implies full respect for the rule of law at the national and international levels. It is therefore essential to address the root causes of conflicts and ensure that human rights are upheld. To that end, it is equally vital to ensure accountability for the commission of atrocity crimes, and here the International Criminal Court plays a vital role. We therefore encourage all States to accede to the Rome Statute and cooperate with the Court. We also urge the Security Council to refer atrocity cases to the Court in situations where it is necessary to guarantee access to justice and prevent impunity.

We would like to conclude by reiterating Peru's commitment to the responsibility to protect and by expressing our gratitude to the Special Advisers to the Secretary-General for their outstanding work.

Mrs. Cupellini (Italy): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for their statements and for the advocacy on the responsibility to protect that the Secretary-General continues to provide, including through his annual reports. I would also like to congratulate Australia and Ghana for having made today's formal debate possible.

Italy aligns itself with the statements delivered by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/72/PV.99), which we have the honour of co-chairing this year, together with Qatar. I would like to make a few additional remarks in my national capacity.

The growing number of attacks on civilians, schools, hospitals, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers; the forced displacement of millions of people and today's unprecedented refugee crisis; and the widespread and systematic use of sexual and gender-based violence as a deliberate strategy by State and non-State actors are stark reminders of the fact that we need to close the gap between our commitment to the principle of the responsibility to protect and our actions. Mass atrocities can and must be prevented. In 2005, we made a commitment: early-warning mechanisms exist, and it is now time for action.

The responsibility to protect lies primarily with national authorities and should therefore start at home and inform our policy decisions at both the national and international levels. In this regard, I would like to highlight three concrete examples of Italy's endeavours.

First, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2017, Italy spared no effort in pursuing the core objective of the Council and, ultimately, of the United Nations, that is, the protection of civilians. We promoted a more systematic handling of cross-cutting issues and transnational threats on the part of the Security Council in the light of their repercussions for international peace. We highlighted the importance of implementing a holistic approach that combines security, development and the protection of human rights.

In this regard, I would like to recall the briefings on the issues of refugees and the threats to the stability of the Mediterranean posed by terrorism, organized crime, migration and human trafficking; the adoption of resolution 2347 (2017), on the impact on international peace and security of the destruction of cultural heritage as a way of destroying national identities; the adoption of resolution 2388 (2017), on trafficking, with its victim-centred approach; and the adoption of resolution 2382 (2017), aimed at strengthening the role of United Nations police in protecting civilians, including by providing assistance and support to local authorities.

We encourage the members of the Security Council to continue to hold regular debates on the threat of atrocity crimes so as to strengthen the Council's role in prevention, including through briefings by the Secretary-General's Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and civil-society representatives.

Secondly, in January we launched the Responsibility to Protect in Schools project, which we developed together with the Netherlands as a concrete way of delivering on our mandate in the Security Council and in order to raise awareness of the importance of protecting fundamental rights and freedoms and establishing international principles for the prevention of mass atrocities. In this role-playing game, students are faced with a fictitious but realistic scenario in which the civilian population is exposed to mass atrocities and crimes. Through the game, they also become aware of the complex dynamics that occur in real life, such as a Government that systematically violates the rights of part of its population; the inability of the United Nations to intervene because it has not been authorized to do so by the Security Council; the specific interests of some countries; and the crucial role played by civil society and the media in raising awareness of the tragic situation through the news, detailed reporting and, above all, images. We will promote the project in additional Italian schools and start collaborating with other Governments to replicate the course internationally.

Thirdly, Italy, as the Western country contributing the most troops to peacekeeping operations, immediately endorsed the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians. We invite other member States to do the same. We believe that the effective protection of civilians requires properly trained troops, adequate equipment and a strong political commitment. Italy will continue to do its part, redoubling its efforts in providing training and offering capacity-building to military, police and judicial officers from all over the world.

Since 2005, through the Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units in Vicenza, we have trained more than 10,000 police personnel units, many of which are deployed in peacekeeping operations in Africa. Our personnel are regularly trained in the areas of human rights, sexual and gender-based violence, the protection of children in armed conflict and the responsibility to protect. Last year we joined the Circle of Leadership on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse, launched by the Secretary-General, to heighten the commitment to preventing and prosecuting cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, including among our military personnel.

Against that backdrop, we truly believe that with the simple measures that are available, we can effectively implement the responsibility to protect. There is no excuse. In this regard, we believe that there is added value in including that responsibility as a standing item on the agenda of the General Assembly so as to allow the United Nations membership to properly and formally debate the issue, share best practices and discuss our differing opinions on the subject.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): We welcome today's first formal debate in the General Assembly on the responsibility to protect, and we align ourselves with the statement delivered by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/72/PV.99).

Despite the increasing number of occasions on which the norm of the responsibility to protect is referenced in United Nations resolutions and debates, the actual gap between our expressed commitment to protect civilian populations and our collective action to do so in crises has widened. Thirteen years after the 2005 World Summit, it is high time to take that norm from the realm of the conceptual to concrete action.

The primary responsibility of each State to protect its population from crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide and ethnic cleansing is not contested. In adopting the norm of the responsibility to protect, we have also collectively agreed on our joint responsibility in the event that individual Governments are either unable or unwilling to fulfil this task.

The norm of the responsibility to protect provides for a wide range of measures, from diplomatic engagement to more robust enforcement measures. The Security Council, as the guardian of international peace and security, is given a special role to that end. In many situations involving mass atrocity crimes, however, the Council is paralysed owing to the use or threat of use of the veto. The steadily increasing number of supporters of the Accountability, Coherence, and Transparency group code of conduct — 117 States at present — is an expression of the collective expectation of the States Members of the United Nations.

Council membership comes with responsibilities and a stated commitment to taking action to end or, ideally, prevent atrocity crimes. The 117 States that have joined the code of conduct have committed to supporting timely and decisive action to this end and to refraining from voting against credible draft resolutions before the Council that pursue this goal. In our view, the code of conduct is a baseline that all States running for Security Council membership should be able to meet. We invite all States that have not yet done so to join and work for the application of the code.

It is disappointing that the political consensus around the norm of the responsibility to protect, 13 years after we agreed on it unanimously, remains fragile. This is due in no small part to misrepresentation of the norm with respect to the use of force. The norm is frequently misconstrued as an attempt to bypass the Charter of the United Nations and to justify military action that has not been authorized by the Security Council. This is a mistake, because it harms not only the norm but also our international legal order. The responsibility to protect does not alter the prohibition on the illegal use of force under the Charter of the United Nations, one of the most important building blocks of the international order; rather, it spells out clearly that military action is possible as a last resort and only when authorized by the Council under Chapter VII.

If the norm of the responsibility to protect is positioned squarely within the framework of the existing regime with respect to the use of force, there will soon be an additional tool for the Council to be more effective in playing its enforcement role regarding the use of force. On 17 July the International Criminal Court (ICC) will commence its exercise of jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, the most serious form of the illegal use of force.

In addition to the established prohibition of the illegal use of force under the Charter of the United Nations, the ICC will, in a complementary manner, offer the avenue of individual criminal responsibility for those in breach of this prohibition. We hope that a significant number of States will join the 35 States parties that have already ratified the Kampala amendments on the crime of aggression, governing the Court's jurisdiction in this respect.

We also hope that the Council will avail itself of this new tool in its work to regulate the legality of the use of force in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

In addition to this new function, the International Criminal Court will continue playing a direct, effective role with respect to the issue we are considering today. Ensuring accountability for mass atrocity crimes is an essential element in preventing their recurrence. Despite its obvious limitations, in the absence of universality of the Rome Statute, and with the Security Council being at best a reluctant enforcer of accountability, the ICC remains the centrepiece of the fight against impunity for such crimes and deserves our continued support.

Mrs. Bogyay (Hungary): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly for convening and supporting this crucial formal debate, which offers an excellent opportunity to renew and enhance our pledge to build a stronger global partnership for the prevention of genocide. We want to thank Australia and Ghana for having pushed so hard to put it on the agenda here in the General Assembly.

We share the growing concerns of the Secretary-General about the increase in the number of victims of atrocity crimes. That is why we have to strengthen the response of the United Nations by implementing specific measures to improve internal United Nations coordination in the area of the responsibility to protect.

Hungary strongly supports the work of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the Secretary-General's decision to appoint a new Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect. It is more important than ever to ensure that States place more emphasis on prevention through various measures, including early-warning systems, political mediation, empowering the victims of crimes, enhancing domestic and international capacities for ending impunity and finding new ways to ensure more effective compliance with international humanitarian law.

As an active member of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect, Hungary is fully dedicated to raising awareness on the issue at the national and international levels. We support the work of the Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities, which among other things will host a workshop on the prevention of radicalization in practice, aimed at raising awareness in the security sector in Hungary on the challenges posed by polarization and radicalization.

In order to enhance the visibility of international human rights mechanisms and to provide a platform for international dialogue on current human rights issues, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary has organized the annual Budapest Human Rights Forum for 10 years now, bringing together national and international human rights experts as well as representatives of non-governmental and governmental organizations and academia.

In the field of crime prevention, for example, we adopted a national crime prevention strategy for the period from 2013 to 2023. We provide various training programmes for professionals working with young people, including mediation training to handle conflict in schools. With regard to human rights, in 2012 the Government established a human rights working group with the purpose of monitoring respect for human rights in Hungary in compliance with the recommendations of the Human Rights Council and the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review.

We believe, of course, that action should be taken not only at the national but also the international level. We therefore support the work of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. Hungary has always been an active member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group, supporting efforts to make the Security Council more efficient, inclusive and legitimate. We advocate for refraining voluntarily from the use of the veto in case of mass atrocities, and we encourage all member States that have not yet done so to sign the code of conduct formulated by the ACT group to strengthen cooperation within the United Nations framework.

The role of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is also vital to ending impunity and bringing perpetrators to justice when national criminal accountability mechanisms are not available. That is why we stand by the ICC and have pledged our full support to the values it defends.

Our eventual goal, of course, should be to ensure peaceful and secure living conditions for all in their homelands, free from the possibility of falling victim to atrocity crimes. However, this can be achieved only by tackling the root causes of conflict, as well as by dealing with transnational threats such as violent extremism, terrorism, human trafficking, modern-day slavery, climate change and water scarcity as part of our broader prevention efforts.

Mrs. Chatardova (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statements made earlier by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/72/PV.99).

I thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his valuable report (A/72/884), whose conclusions we broadly share. As a member of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect, the Czech Republic remains fully committed to that responsibility. We call for the full and consistent implementation of all three pillars in line with paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1). The Czech Republic stresses the importance of prioritizing and meaningfully investing in the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

I would like to thank Finland and Mexico for having recently convened the eighth annual meeting of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points, as well as the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect for its hard work. In line with the Secretary-General's report, we encourage all Member States to appoint their national responsibility-to-protect focal points and join the growing global network.

All Member States must uphold their obligations under international human rights law and humanitarian and refugee law, which underpin our commitment to the responsibility to protect. We condemn the growing number of deliberate attacks on civilians, humanitarian workers, journalists, peacekeepers, hospitals, schools, places of worship and cultural sites.

The Czech Republic stresses the need for the Security Council to act effectively and consistently when faced with mass atrocity situations. In that regard, we welcome the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group regarding Security Council action against genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, and the French and Mexican initiative on voluntary restraint on the use of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council, aimed at supporting timely and decisive action by the Security Council to prevent atrocities. Ensuring accountability for mass atrocity crimes is one of the best ways to prevent them from recurring. National accountability efforts should be strengthened, as States have the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute crimes committed within their jurisdiction. The International Criminal Court remains the most important institution in the struggle to end impunity for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Czech Republic continues to support the Court and provides financial support for the accountability mechanisms established by the United Nations, including the Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, established under resolution 71/248.

The Czech Republic is concerned about the fact that sexual and gender-based violence is increasingly employed as a deliberate strategy by State and non-State perpetrators. We remain determined to help combat sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict countries. In partnership with non-governmental organizations, the Czech Republic implements projects aimed at preventing sexual violence and abuse of women and girls, including through setting up centres for marginalized and abused girls, as well as by providing for the health care and hygienic needs of internally displaced persons in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Libya, South Sudan, Iraq, Pakistan, Jordan and Bangladesh.

As a candidate country for the Human Rights Council, the Czech Republic remains committed to the responsibility to protect. We encourage the preventive role of the Human Rights Council, in accordance with its mandate. We stress the important role that Geneva-based institutions and mechanisms such as the Universal Periodic Review and special procedures mandate-holders can play in preventing and responding to mass atrocity crimes, as well as the importance of regular Security Council briefings on mass atrocity situations by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

I would like to assure members that the Czech Republic is ready to explore all possible ways of translating the concept of the responsibility to protect into concrete action.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland welcomes the inclusion of this important debate on the responsibility to protect on the agenda of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. Genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes are the most serious crimes under public international law, which obliges all States — whether or not they are directly party to a conflict — to take all necessary measures to prevent such crimes, end those under way, bring their perpetrators to justice and prevent their recurrence. As we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, it is fitting to recall the fundamental role played by this institution in the fight against impunity. We encourage all States to cooperate with the Court and support it so that it can continue to fulfil its vital role in the prevention of serious crimes.

We commemorated World Refugee Day only a few days ago. To grasp the gravity of the situation, one has only to look at the unprecedented number of 68.5 million displaced persons throughout the world, the great majority of whom have been displaced owing to conflict. Discussions on the responsibility to protect continue to be essential, and the debate on this issue should be set up within an institutionalized framework and take place on a regular basis. With regard to such institutionalized frameworks, we underscore the importance of the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and its Special Advisers, whose cooperation has been invaluable to Switzerland in the context of its commitment to the prevention of atrocities, not only in the framework of the Global Action against Mass Atrocity Crimes but in others as well.

Switzerland is convinced that effective prevention requires addressing the root causes of conflicts. In that regard, we especially welcome the process of reflection on the system of protection of human rights, in particular on the role of the Human Rights Council. We call on all States to cooperate with that essential body. More attention needs to be given to the preventive potential of the Human Rights Council, and together with a group of States we therefore introduced a draft resolution during the current session under way in Geneva. Moreover, the three pillars of the United Nations must be brought closer together so that real progress can be made in preventing violence and human suffering, which dovetails with the prevention vision that the Secretary-General has elaborated on many times.

The goal of moving from early warning to early action can be achieved only if the Security Council more frequently and effectively avails itself of the preventive role that the Charter of the United Nations confers on it. In that context, the Council should make greater use of the potential offered by existing formal and informal mechanisms.

In conclusion, Switzerland would also like to point to the vital role that civil society can play in the prevention of atrocities, not only as a voice condemning violations but as an entity possessing expertise in a specific area that has not yet been fully developed or implemented at the national level.

Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba is grateful to the President of the General Assembly for his good offices in convening this meeting and for the efforts of the Secretary-General in preparing his latest report on the responsibility to protect (A/72/884).

Cuba has repeatedly stated that the issue of the responsibility to protect continues to present serious concerns for many countries, particularly small and developing States, owing to the lack of consensus on various elements of the concept and their identification, which can be easily manipulated for political purposes. It is a fallacy to speak of the principle of the responsibility to protect. Such a responsibility is not a principle but a concept whose characteristics, rules of implementation and assessment mechanisms are far from being established and agreed. In that regard, it is inappropriate to speak of strengthening the implementation of the responsibility to protect in the absence of a consensus on its scope and implications that would resolve diverging interpretations, ensure its universal recognition and acceptance and confer legitimacy on proposed action for its implementation.

It is fitting to underscore the fact that the international understanding on the responsibility to protect is circumscribed by paragraphs 138 and 139 of resolution 60/1, where the concept is restricted to cases of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and which state that the duty of the international community is to encourage and assist States in exercising that responsibility, as appropriate.

The term “atrocity crimes” is not part of that understanding and should therefore not be used to refer to the four cases mentioned in paragraphs 138 and 139. My delegation is concerned that the terms “atrocity crimes” or “mass atrocities” may be used selectively and for political purposes to refer to various situations, given the lack of clarity and agreement on the United Nations mechanisms and bodies that would be responsible for their identification and classification.

In a United Nations where attempts are made to impose rather than negotiate and countries are threatened because of their sovereign decisions, there is a very valid concern about the lack of definition as to who decides when there is a need to protect; who determines that a State is not protecting its population; and who decides what action is to be taken and on the basis of what criteria. Nor is it clear so far how we can ensure that the option to take action is implemented with the consent of the affected State, so as to avoid using that concept as a justification for a supposed and non-existent right to intervene.

International efforts to prevent the occurrence of acts of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity — an objective that Cuba has always shared — should contribute to strengthening the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in particular sovereign equality, territorial integrity and self-determination. However, the ambiguities of that concept and the implications of the exercise of its so-called three pillars run counter to those purposes and principles. For that reason, the pre-eminence of the principles of voluntarism, prior request and the consent of States should be recognized in the context of the responsibility to protect.

If the intention is to prevent, the root causes of those situations — such as underdevelopment, poverty, an unjust international economic order, inequality and social exclusion, hunger, marginalization, food insecurity or a lack of access to drinking water — should be addressed, as well as the structural problems that determine the outbreak of conflicts that escalate to extreme situations, among others, that, unfortunately, are not promoted with the same force by many of those who defend the advancement of the concept of the responsibility to protect. Those would be real acts of prevention.

Finally, we reiterate that ensuring that the international community does not remain indifferent in the face of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity is a noble effort. In many cases, however, the promotion of the responsibility to protect masks an interest in having yet another tool to facilitate interference in internal affairs, with agendas for regime change and subversion in third countries, most of which are small and developing States. Unfortunately, world history is replete with sad examples that justify such a concern.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): We welcome the inclusion of the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity on the formal agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. At a time when the atrocities committed in various corners of the world continue to cause unprecedented human suffering, the international community must address the issue of preventing such crimes. We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive annual report (A/72/884), which constitutes a solid basis for our deliberations today.

At the 2005 World Summit, Member States made a landmark commitment with regard to their responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Unfortunately, the report of the Secretary-General portrays a daunting picture concerning the negative trends in that regard. Since 2005, deaths caused by armed conflicts have increased tenfold and the number of people forcibly displaced has reached record levels. It is clear that civilians are the ones who pay the highest price when Member States fail to uphold their responsibility to protect. As we speak, millions of innocent people who have had to flee their homes owing to the atrocities committed in Syria, Myanmar and elsewhere are seeking to survive in desperate situations. In order to prevent and alleviate that immense human suffering, the international community must consider efficient ways and means to narrow the gap between its commitments and actions.

The responsibility to protect has not yet become an established norm of international law, and its scope and implementation should be defined and refined. Efforts in that regard should not be carried out in a way that reinterprets or renegotiates well-established principles of international law or the existing legal framework. Crimes of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity are well-defined legal concepts. We should implement the relevant legal framework faithfully and consistently. We should also bear in mind that the concept of the responsibility to protect seeks to establish a delicate balance between safeguarding the humanitarian concerns of the international community while respecting the principle of national sovereignty. Pursuing a non-selective approach vis-à-vis the implementation of that concept is key if we are to achieve the widest possible consensus among the membership on that important issue. Discussions such as the ones we are having today can contribute to progress in that regard.

We welcome the Secretary-General's approach, which has a central focus on prevention. Indeed, prevention is one of the most effective instruments in our toolbox. Turkey believes that preventive policies and mediation efforts should have a more prominent role. With that understanding, Turkey attaches particular importance to preventive diplomacy and is pioneering mediation efforts not only in the United Nations but also through regional and bilateral initiatives in our wider geographical area and working actively for the peaceful settlement of disputes. When efforts aimed at prevention do not succeed, United Nations organs, including the Security Council, must remain ready to assume their responsibilities as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We hope that the discussions on the responsibility to protect and its implementation will also contribute to the efforts aimed at restraining the use of the veto power in the Security Council where crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide are concerned.

Before concluding, I would like to underscore that ensuring accountability for crimes that have been committed should also be an indispensable component of our discussion today. Accountability is essential not only to avoiding impunity and delivering justice but also to preventing the recurrence of atrocities in future.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The membership of the United Nations has remained a symbol of State independence and sovereignty. The United Nations has also become the principal international forum for collective work aimed at realizing the three objectives of State-building, nation-building and economic development. The United Nations has therefore become the main arena in which the sovereignty of States is strongly defended and not abandoned.

In a world characterized by disparities in power and resources, in many States sovereignty is the best, and sometimes the first and only, line of defence. However, it is more than a functional concept in international relations. It is a recognition for many States and nations of their equality in status and dignity with other States and nations. It protects their unique identity and national freedom, and asserts their right to determine their own destiny.

States and the international community must work together to tackle the root causes of internal conflicts. Required or beneficial interventions should provide support in terms of meeting existing needs and addressing the negative political aspects of a situation, with a view to establishing democracy, promoting capacity-building and adopting measures for confidence-building among communities and various groups, while addressing issues of economic deprivation and lack of opportunity.

Over the past three decades, the urgency of the problem of dealing decisively with the causes of environmental deterioration has grown, as it is directly responsible for internal conflicts and poses a real threat to the existence of planet Earth. This is a danger not just to international peace and security but to the very existence of the human race.

Development assistance and cooperation are necessary in order to counter the inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities, strengthen economic growth, enhance the terms of trade, provide access to international markets for the products of developing nations, encourage essential economic and structural reforms and provide technical support in order to promote the relevant instruments and organizational institutions. Tackling root causes also means strengthening legal protections and existing legal institutions while supporting efforts aimed at promoting the rule of law and protecting and ensuring the independence of judicial systems.

If our objectives are to strengthen, not weaken, the sovereignty of States and improve the capacity of the international community to respond vigorously when a State commits serious violations of human rights and fails to protect its citizens, it is essential to reconcile the two objectives. This issue requires further study in a spirit of creativity, so as to devise fresh solutions under the umbrella of international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations.

We should recall in this regard that a number of great politicians in the international arena have commented on the concept of the responsibility to protect by saying that although the objective is a noble one, the concept itself gives rise to a number of questions. It is our conviction that this description is accurate. It certainly reflects our own position.

(*spoke in English*)

Finally, we have to remember that the post-Second World War order was built on collective security and the prohibition of acts of aggression, particularly inter-State wars of aggression. The peacekeeping and peacebuilding system has given due and satisfactory attention to internal conflicts and the attendant risk of violations. In many, if not nearly all, Security Council resolutions on situations of internal conflict and violence, the Council has qualified such situations as threats to international peace and security. It would therefore not be possible to perceive the existence of any vacuum were the current situation not built on a post-1990 order that is primarily driven by the desire to consolidate interests and influence.

The concept of the responsibility to protect as advanced today is marred by contradictions in relation to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the system of collective security that it created. It is marred by indifference to the fact that the concept is being exclusively directed at developing countries suffering from underdevelopment, environmental degradation and internal conflict. Indeed, and most importantly, it is marred by the selective approach that it fosters, built as it is on mere feasibility. That is why the concept is theoretically linked to and promoted in conjunction with the call to promote the jurisdiction of the infamous International Criminal Court.

Ascribing primary responsibility to States as a justification for advancing the notion of responsibility to protect is fallacious. The primary-responsibility principle, as provided for in Article 24 of the Charter, is linked to the operation of Chapter VII of the Charter on collective security. The responsibility to protect is a repudiation of Chapter VII of the Charter.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): France thanks the President of the General Assembly for organizing today's debate and the Secretary-General for his report on the responsibility to protect (A/72/884) and, above all, for his personal commitment to the issue. I would also like to thank the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, whose work and dedication I commend.

The concept of the responsibility to protect was endorsed in 2005 by all States members of the General Assembly so that States would never again commit atrocities against their own citizens. Yet as the Secretary-General has pointed out, despite the fact that we will be commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December, the most serious crimes are unfortunately far from being on the decline around the world, whether in Syria, Burma, South Sudan or the Central African Republic, to cite some striking examples. Working together, we must — and we can — do more to protect the most vulnerable.

Despite the solemn commitments we have jointly made, tragic situations that the United Nations is powerless to address continue to prevail. We all are thinking here, of course, of the situation in Syria. Over the past seven years, the Syrian regime has committed numerous crimes against its own people, including through the use of chemical weapons, and has consistently violated its obligations under international law, primarily in humanitarian matters. This is an incontrovertible fact that has been repeatedly established by robust and impartial mechanisms that form part of our collective security architecture. However, the United Nations has been prevented from acting effectively because of Russia's 12 vetoes in the Security Council.

France is not resigned to that situation. On the contrary, we call on those who have influence over the Syrian regime to assume their responsibilities. It is in that spirit that France, through its highest authorities, has engaged Russia and Iran in recent months, pragmatically and in accordance with principles of international law, so that urgent concrete measures can be taken on the ground to end the suffering of the men, women and children of Syria. That is the primary goal of the Small Group of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, of which France is part, which is meeting today in Geneva with Staffan de Mistura, the United Nations Special Envoy for Syria.

Another tragic situation that shocks the conscience is that of the Rohingya. More than 720,000 have fled Burma to Bangladesh since the end of August 2017. France reiterates its condemnation of the serious human rights violations committed against the Rohingya people. The Security Council has visited the area, and the measures taken by the Burmese authorities are a first step, but the commitments have yet to be translated into action. Much progress remains to be made. It is therefore essential to ensure that the international community, especially through the Security Council, remains vigilant and mobilized.

It is up to every State to protect its own peoples. If States fail to do so, however, it is the responsibility of the international community, represented by our Organization and within it the Security Council, to work tirelessly to that end. Considering the magnitude of the challenges, the Council must be able to respond, especially in situations of mass atrocities. In that regard, France and Mexico have proposed a concrete measure — suspending the use of the veto in the event of mass atrocities. We invite all States, especially the other four permanent members of the Council, to join that initiative.

We also have a responsibility to support the fight against impunity and to support independent and impartial justice. With the support of France and other partners, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic supports the operationalization of the Special Criminal Court, which has competence in serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as other abuses that may constitute war crimes, crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity. France calls on all States to support and cooperate with fact-finding missions, commissions of inquiry and international criminal justice instruments — first and foremost of which is the International Criminal Court, in the case of the most serious crimes. We must remain vigilant against those who spread ethnic and religious hatred and violence, which the Security Council still has the means to sanction.

Mr. Tevi (Vanuatu), Vice-President, took the Chair.

France believes that the Geneva-based institutions and mechanisms are also essential in preventing and responding to mass crimes, whether through the Universal Periodic Review or the regular briefings of the Security Council by the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

When we talk about the responsibility to protect, we are not talking about a principle meant to divide; we are talking about a compass to protect populations. The responsibility to pronect is not in opposition to sovereignty, quite the contrary. By definition, a principle of action can always be enriched, and that is where the United Nations and the whole international community can play their key role. France will continue to play its full part.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for Argentina to participate in this debate, which represents a unique opportunity for analysing the pending challenges to the international community with regard to the responsibility to protect.

First of all, I would like to welcome the tenth report of the Secretary-General (A/72/884), which stresses that early action is central to the responsibility to protect. As the report indicates, while there has been progress in efforts to implement the responsibility to protect, there is a growing gap between our responsibilities and the daily experience of vulnerable populations. It is noted that the main problem is the failure to translate early warnings of atrocity crimes into effective early action so as to prevent them.

Argentina shares the Secretary-General's diagnosis and believes that all States, as equal and sovereign, have reciprocal rights and responsibilities, and all should be equally committed to the protection of their populations from atrocity crimes, through respect for international law, especially humanitarian law, human rights norms and refugee law, as well as the to the fight against impunity.

In that context, Argentina considers that prevention is the most important dimension in protecting populations from atrocity crimes. That requires building capacity in States by training public officials capable of preventing the four crimes under the responsibility to protect. It is also crucial to ensure the participation of other actors such as civil society, since in many cases they are the ones working in the field with States and providing important technical assistance. The positive role of regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention and resolution efforts should be highlighted as well. We also consider it important to increase our efforts to empower women as agents in the prevention of atrocity crimes.

We believe it is essential to strengthen the accountability of those responsible for atrocity crimes. The ratification of the Rome Statute and its amendments is key to protecting populations in the light of the Statute's contribution to the fight against impunity and as a deterrent mechanism.

Also, on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, we must reiterate the importance of ratifying that effective international instrument for accountability. We also invite all Member States to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration, in support of which my country had the honour to organize the second international conference in Buenos Aires in 2017.

Argentina supports the initiatives of the United Nations system, such as the responsibility to protect, peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding actions, the promotion of the rule of law and the Human Rights Up Front initiative, among others. We would also like to highlight the contribution of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points, composed of 60 Member States, including Argentina, as a tool for building individual and collective capacities to prevent mass atrocities. I want to express our support for the work of the Office for the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect and the crucial role played by both Special Advisers in an area so relevant to our country.

In conclusion, Argentina would like to reiterate the importance of reaffirming our commitment to the responsibility to protect, redoubling our efforts towards its full implementation and underscoring once again the fundamental role of prevention and accountability from a cross-cutting and comprehensive perspective in all our efforts and initiatives.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): Let me start by thanking the President for convening this meeting of the General Assembly on the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Even though the General Assembly is holding its first formal meeting since 2009, it has remained seized of the matter, albeit in an informal manner. My delegation was among those that preferred the continuation of our discussion within the existing framework, for we were not fully convinced of the utility of a one-off formal meeting of the Assembly on an issue that evokes such divergent viewpoints on its nature, scope and application.

In any case, we believe that the onus should not be on the modalities of our discussion but rather on the substantive nature of the differences in our perspectives and viewpoints. Or course, that view in no way diminishes my country's abiding commitment to the safety and security of all our citizens. That is, in fact, an obligation inherent in the nature of sovereignty and national responsibility.

In recent days, the issue of protection has come into a renewed global spotlight, in particular because of the grave situation in occupied Palestine. It is also in Palestine that the failure of the international community to uphold those norms has been most manifest and telling. Thus, as the killing fields of Gaza were drenched in the blood of more than 130 innocent Palestinians, including women and children, the Security Council was a silent bystander to the plight of the long-suffering Palestinian people. Even more disturbing, while the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians throughout the occupied territory is a right expressly recognized in several Security Council resolutions, the Council failed to reaffirm that right on 1 June. As we all know, as a result, on 13 June the General Assembly had to step in (see A/ES-10/PV.38) yet again to fill the void left by the Security Council's inaction.

The edifice of the responsibility to protect stands on more tenuous ground today than ever before, for decisions taken by the international community have often failed the test of the highest standards of objectivity and impartiality. That masquerade of political expediency posing as high-flowing idealism has meant that resultant actions have lacked the legal and moral legitimacy to gain wider acceptability. After all, if we are selective in our approach, expressing indignation at some transgressions while choosing to wilfully ignore others, any norm will quickly turn into mere pretence.

Against that backdrop, calls for accountability would invariably smack of double standards and selectivity, especially when egregious crimes, including killing and mass blinding, are being committed in full view of the international community. Many of those tragic victims, including in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, have the further indignity of living under foreign occupation, which is illegal. What is therefore needed is not an abdication of our collective responsibility to prevent those grave crimes but a willingness to apply consistent and uniform standards of moral outrage to all of them.

The will of the international community, particularly the permanent members of the Security Council, is obviously crucial. That is especially important to addressing issues of the admissibility of actions and to ensure their consistency, since we have seen that in the face of divisions within the Council, unilateral actions have led to situations characterized as illegal but legitimate. We should neither attempt to establish nor accept any artificial duality between the twin imperatives of legitimacy and legality. We should also be mindful that the notion of the responsibility to protect cannot give way to a mere re-enactment of the discredited humanitarian interventions of the past. For we know only too well that such eventualities would be reserved only for the most powerful States and might actually lead to preventing justice itself from being administered.

At its core, the responsibility to protect is not a license to intervene in external situations but rather a universal principle of non-indifference, in keeping with the historical context and cultural norms of individual settings. It is predicated on the express recognition that the responsibility for the protection of civilians lies, first and foremost, with Member States. Set against the overarching principle of State sovereignty, the responsibility to protect cannot become a basis on which to contravene the principles of non-interference and non-intervention, or to question the national sovereignty or territorial integrity of States.

In a world beset by growing socioeconomic inequalities, situations leading to the responsibility to protect are more often than not the result of underdevelopment and poverty. A renewed commitment to helping States build their capacity, including through governance and judicial reforms, is therefore crucial. A long-term commitment on the part of the international community, including to mobilizing adequate resources for sustainable development and poverty eradication, as also reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is the best investment in prevention.

As rightly noted by the Secretary-General in his latest report (A/72/884), it costs far more to pick up the pieces after a crisis than it does to prevent it. What is therefore needed is a surge in diplomacy, not in conflict, in order to achieve the goal of preventing grave crimes against humanity.

Mr. Heumann (Israel): At the outset, let me just say that I think it is regrettable that some here have injected political ideas into this forum rather than focusing on constructive comments on the important topic of the responsibility to protect.

My delegation would like to express its appreciation to Australia and Ghana for their commitment to this vital issue, and for promoting a debate in the General Assembly under a new agenda item. Israel supports the inclusion of the topic of the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity on the formal agenda of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/72/884).

As we read the news every day, we are reminded of the importance of this issue. In every region, from Africa to the Middle East and from Asia to Latin America, we see the human toll of conflicts — in lives lost, families torn apart and the millions of men, women and children who have been left homeless and even stateless. As the Secretary-General said, trends continue to move in the wrong direction. Peace and security seem farther away than ever, and the price is paid by civilians throughout the world. We have to reverse those trends.

Israel, the nation State of the Jewish people, understands the importance of the international community's responsibility to prevent genocide and mass atrocities. Our understanding is born of centuries of torment, persecution and exile, culminating in the Holocaust — a systematic State-sponsored genocide that murdered one third of our people. In fact, it is the atrocities of the Holocaust that led the international community to pledge "never again", and to strive to uphold that promise through the establishment of this very institution. But our global community has fallen short. There are still too many instances where that promise has not been fulfilled. History does not forget, and it will not forgive the international community if it does not act to prevent genocide and mass atrocities.

Israel's unwavering commitment to the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities led us to join the consensus on the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1), including paragraphs 138 and 139, which adopt the principle of the responsibility to protect. At the same time, we stress that this doctrine does not create new legal norms or obligations, but rather must be construed and applied within existing legal frameworks. Given the fact that this is a novel doctrine, we want to highlight the need for further deliberation and discussion. We would like to offer some preliminary suggestions as to how to make that principle more effective in practice.

For the responsibility to protect to become an effective doctrine, it must also address the role and responsibility of non-State actors and terrorist groups that commit atrocities while blatantly disregarding international law. Furthermore, the doctrine should focus only on the most severe situations that involve mass atrocities, ethnic cleansing or genocide.

One of the most important issues with regard to the responsibility to protect is the primary responsibility of States to protect their own civilians. The international community must encourage and assist States in their efforts to carry out this responsibility. We must maintain our focus on this aspect of the doctrine and strengthen our efforts in the areas of early warning and prevention. To ensure effective and long-term prevention of mass atrocities, we must start at the foundations of States and societies. We must help States that wish to adopt stable democratic institutions, based on the institutional framework of the separation of powers and the rule of law, to do so successfully. For Israel, those are not just words. We have extensive capacity-building programmes in cooperation with United Nations agencies to help interested States, mainly developing and post-conflict countries, build and strengthen their judicial institutions.

Another crucial aspect that deserves our focus is education, particularly for our young people. It is of the utmost importance that young people today understand rule-of-law values, human rights, tolerance and coexistence. A well-known saying warns us that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. We must ensure that younger generations are fully equipped with a detailed understanding of history, including its atrocities and their causes and repercussions for the affected societies. In Israel, those elements are a central part of our core curriculum, with many schools organizing educational delegations to Holocaust sites in Europe.

Paragraph 138 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document stipulates that it is the responsibility of every State to protect its population from the crimes outlined, including their incitement. The realities on the ground today show that incitement to hatred and violence is a growing phenomenon. It has become a major contributor to the increase in atrocities and other crimes committed. We therefore believe that greater attention should be given to the dangerous role of incitement and ways of countering it when developing a doctrine for the responsibility to protect.

It is our responsibility to ensure that the atrocities of today do not continue tomorrow. We must never allow innocent civilians to pay the price of war, and by developing the most effective doctrine for the responsibility to protect, through our investment in capacity-building and education, we can help re-route our priorities and, in doing so, leave atrocities in the past and strive for a more peaceful and secure future.

Mr. Ntsoane (South Africa): We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this timely debate on the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We also thank the Secretary-General for his 2018 report (A/72/884), entitled "Responsibility to protect: from early warning to early action".

South Africa believes that the role of the international community in conflicts must remain that of assisting affected States. That must be done in accordance with their own constitutional and legal provisions and with the acknowledgment that the Security Council has a responsibility to act to stop such violations if it becomes clear that the specific State is manifestly failing to implement its responsibility in that regard.

The political basis for the responsibility to protect was firmly set out in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1). Our respective leaders displayed a clear intolerance for impunity and criminality by adopting the document by consensus. Going back on that undertaking is therefore not an option.

My delegation strongly agrees that prevention of atrocities is central to the successful implementation of the responsibility to protect. We continue to advocate for greater focus on the wide range of the tools of diplomacy available to us. South Africa has long been a proponent of improving response methods provided in the Charter of the United Nations for the pacific settlement of disputes, and of ensuring that the Security Council redirects its responses to emerging conflicts. The failure to employ new response mechanisms puts the responsibility on the General Assembly to take action, especially if populations are at risk of suffering from crimes in the context of the responsibility to protect. In addition, we believe that in order to succeed, the responsibility to protect requires the sustained and predictable provision of resources.

Present-day conflicts are largely centred on internal strife in Member States and transnational threats. Unfortunately, while the world has changed, the Security Council has largely remained the same. Contemporary challenges have brought divisions within the Council to the forefront, especially among its permanent members. At times, such paralysis has cost human lives. A more representative Council would be more effective in dealing with complex contemporary challenges. As advised by the Secretary-General, preventive action is built on trust, transparency and accountability. The Security Council should therefore be cognizant of that in its assessments and decision-making if it is to be effective.

South Africa continues to advocate for a more representative Security Council with a stronger voice for those closer to crises, and guided by non-discriminatory decision-making and collective interests rather than narrow national ones. The Council should therefore increase its engagement with Member States, especially those affected by conflict, and be open to effective engagement with regional and subregional institutions.

We also believe that there should be no selectivity in the implementation of the responsibility to protect aimed at instigating any Government change. We reiterate that the three pillars of the responsibility to protect are mutually supporting and non-sequential, while emphasizing the importance of prioritizing and meaningfully investing in the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Furthermore, we believe that the responsibility to protect must give priority to the core interests of the safety and well-being of affected civilians and populations. The responsibility to protect must not be the narrow national interest of those who seek intervention or who implement Security Council mandates. Any Council mandate imposing a collective international responsibility to protect response must be fully respected and implemented in the letter and spirit of its provisions rather than using the mandate as a pretext for other motives.

We too welcome the report and its recommendations, which reaffirm that States have the primary responsibility to protect their populations. We also note the recommendation that Member States appoint a senior official to serve as national focal point for the responsibility to protect to coordinate national activities, share good practices and spearhead cooperation. In that regard, South Africa has appointed a focal point on the responsibility to protect to inform the Global Network. That represents a clear commitment to strengthening prevention efforts and accountability measures. Furthermore, we also agree with the report that regional and subregional arrangements have a unique and vitally important role to play in the prevention of atrocity crimes and in developing regional capacities for the early warning and assessment of atrocity crimes.

We support the proposal whereby regional entities and the United Nations can explore ways to improve the transmission of information and analysis in order to facilitate coordinated assessments and responses. In that regard, the South African Government remains committed to fully contributing to conflict prevention efforts, the protection of civilians and achieving sustainable peace within the framework of concerted multilateralism. At the regional level, the African Union Peace and Security Council, in partnership with other multilateral agencies, has set up early warning systems and directed member States to set up national early-warning centres to monitor connectivity and compliance.

In conclusion, South Africa reiterates its support and commitment to the implementation of the rights and obligations under the instruments of international human rights law and international law.

Mrs. Anderberg (Sweden): Sweden fully aligns itself with the statements delivered by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/72/PV.99).

The responsibility to protect is a commitment to protecting populations from atrocity crimes. In the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1), all States Members of the United Nations expressed their commitment to the responsibility to protect concept and its three pillars. Since then, the responsibility to protect has received some misleading criticism in relation to the use of military interventions to stop atrocity crimes. Collective action under the third pillar may include coercive or non-coercive measures, and it is imperative that they are in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

We need to acknowledge the responsibility to protect in its broader sense and to stress the basics of the concept. The core of the concept lies in prevention. The continuing work on identifying risks, developing early warning systems and early assessment capabilities all aims to prevent atrocity crimes. However, early warning must be followed by early action. In that respect, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Responsibility to protect: from early warning to early action" (A/72/884). We support the report's recommendations, including with regard to strengthening existing capacities, promoting accountability and recognizing the contribution of all actors, including the role of women, in preventing atrocity crimes.

It is the obligation of each State to protect its population. There is also the larger commitment of the international community as a whole to supporting States in meeting their responsibilities. We therefore welcome the engagement of the international community and the inclusion of the responsibility to protect as a formal item on the agenda of the upcoming session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Bonser (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada thanks the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for their statements (see A/72/PV.99), and Australia and Ghana for their leadership in including the responsibility to protect on the agenda of the General Assembly. The inclusion of the responsibility to protect on the formal agenda of the General Assembly provides an opportunity to reflect on our shared responsibility in preventing mass atrocity crimes.

We welcome the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/884). We also wish to underscore the work accomplished by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Dieng, and the former Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, Mr. Šimonović, in mainstreaming atrocity prevention within the United Nations system. Given our shared priority for prevention, we hope that a Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect will soon be appointed.

(*spoke in English*)

At the 2005 World Summit, Heads of State and Government committed to preventing international atrocity crimes by adopting the key principles that underpin the responsibility to protect. Despite the robust normative framework that has been developed over the years to protect populations from grievous harm, as we speak, 65.6 million people, a large proportion of whom are children, are forcibly displaced around the world. In Syria, Yemen, Myanmar and South Sudan, to name just a few country-specific situations, millions are seeking protection and the preservation of their livelihoods and basic human dignity. As noted in the Secretary-General's report on the responsibility to protect, the overall trend since 2005 is a tenfold increase in civilian deaths.

Numbers matter, but so do the stories behind the numbers. Behind every death is a genuine human tragedy for an individual, a family and community. Those left behind are left to cope with deep trauma for which no statistics can account. In addition, illegal attacks on civilians, civilian infrastructure, health care and medical and humanitarian personnel and the denial of life-saving humanitarian assistance leave wide-ranging and cumulative scars.

The multilateral and rules-based international order that binds us together requires our sustained support more than ever. Respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law is essential to safeguarding humankind. If we are to prevent atrocity crimes, we must understand and implement the lessons of the past. We can do far more to prevent conflict, including by building State capacities for early warning, conflict analysis, dispute resolution and mediation. States that invest in inclusivity and cohesion, allow civil society to thrive and welcome civil-society voices benefit from increased stability and diversity. However, there are troubling instances where Member States seek to constrain the voices of civil society, including within the United Nations itself. States with effective, accountable institutions are among the best defenders of human rights.

Canada supports the renewed focus of the United Nations on prevention and champions the values of inclusive and accountable governance, peaceful pluralism, gender equality and human rights. We believe that inclusive national ownership can reduce the stresses that may lead to conflict and can help to build resilience and prevent internal crises from escalating and engulfing countries and regions.

Canada believes that women play an integral role in building a culture of prevention. We are committed to promoting the full, active and equal participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict State-building.

If prevention fails, the response should be a collective one. The Security Council has a specific responsibility to ensure that early warning leads to appropriate responses. There is a humanitarian cost to inaction or to inadequate actions. It is essential that the Security Council come together to take appropriate action when atrocity risks emerge. In that regard, we encourage more regular briefings to the Council by the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect and by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Canada is proud of the leadership role it has played in establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC), which will celebrate its twentieth anniversary in July. Canada remains a strong supporter of and advocate for the ICC and shares the values that it stands for — fighting impunity and ensuring that victims of the most serious international crimes have a path to justice and accountability.

We have a strong normative framework aimed at improving our collective approach and capacity to protect civilians. We remain committed to preventive actions and urge States to uphold their obligations under international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law, which underpin our commitment to the responsibility to protect.

Mr. Sauer (Finland): Finland aligns itself with the statements made earlier by the observer of the European Union and by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/72/PV.99).

We thank the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for their statements today (*ibid.*). Finland welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendations in his report, entitled "Responsibility to protect: from early warning to early action" (A/72/884). As the title suggests, translating early warning into early action is crucial. The responsibility to protect remains central to our common agenda for preventing genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. We also thank Australia and Ghana for their leadership in including the responsibility to protect on the agenda of the General Assembly this year.

Earlier this month, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Finland and Mexico, in cooperation with the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, hosted the eighth Annual Meeting of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points in Helsinki. The meeting brought together national focal points and other participants from more than 40 countries and international organizations that aim to promote the responsibility to protect and the prevention of mass atrocity at the national, regional and international levels. Among the invited participants was the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng.

The Helsinki meeting provided an excellent opportunity for the participants to exchange experiences and best practices on how to integrate responsibility-to-protect considerations into their daily work at the national level and in foreign policy. The meeting highlighted the role of mediation and noted the twentieth anniversary of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). We believe that it was important in reaffirming that there are still forces that believe strongly in the rule of law and the rules-based international order.

Lastly, Finland remains a staunch supporter of the ICC. We hope that the twentieth anniversary of the Rome Statute will serve to highlight the value and the results of the ICC. The goal of ending impunity for the most serious international crimes is high on the agenda of Finland's foreign policy. We are very much justified in discussing the role of the ICC during today's meeting, since support to the activities of the Court could also act as a deterrent.

Mr. Flynn (Ireland): Ireland welcomes the inclusion of the responsibility to protect on the agenda of the General Assembly. We hope it can evolve into a standing item for future debates.

The World Summit Outcome document of 2005 was a groundbreaking achievement, and since its adoption, the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing has emerged as an important global principle. Paragraphs 138 and 139 of that document effectively outline the three pillars of responsibility, assistance and response. Ireland reaffirms its commitment to those pillars.

The three pillars were never intended to be sequential in their implementation. Rather, they focused on an early and flexible response tailored to individual situations. In particular, misconceptions about the relationship between the third pillar and military intervention must be addressed. From diplomacy, mediation, public advocacy and humanitarian assistance to peacekeeping, sanctions, embargoes and peacebuilding, the broad range of measures available under the third pillar effectively guards against its being equated with military intervention.

Ireland warmly welcomes the Secretary-General's balanced report, entitled "Responsibility to protect: from early warning to early action" (A/72/884). Its focus on strengthening existing capacities, promoting accountability and expanding civilian action provides important guidance on how we might prioritize action in the area of the responsibility to protect. The report also notes that the gap between our words of commitment and the experience of vulnerable populations around the world has grown. Thirteen years after agreeing to the principle of the responsibility to protect, we must now prioritize and meaningfully invest in taking its implementation forward within the United Nations. The report states that the international community has been insufficiently resolute in its implementation and that trends continue to move in the wrong direction.

Given that we are marking the seventieth anniversary of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide this year, we strongly encourage Member States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so as a matter of high priority. We also call on the States Members of the United Nations to support the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, which has been endorsed by 117 countries, and the French and Mexican declaration on voluntary restraint in the use of the veto by permanent members of the Security Council. Those complementary initiatives are crucial to ensuring that the Security Council acts effectively and consistently when faced with mass atrocity situations.

Ensuring accountability for mass atrocity crimes is one of best ways to prevent their recurrence. Recognizing that States have the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute crimes committed within their jurisdiction, Ireland fully supports the International Criminal Court, which will celebrate its twentieth anniversary on 17 July. It remains the most important institutional development in the battle to end impunity for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. We also welcome the European Union's appointment of national responsibility-to-protect focal points and encourage other regional organizations and Member States to do likewise and to engage in the excellent work of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points.

Multilateral cooperation is our best chance to avert man-made atrocities. We therefore encourage better use of the United Nations system to bring potential mass atrocity situations to the early attention of the Security Council. As a candidate for the Security Council for the 2021-2022 term, Ireland will seek to ensure that the Council acts to prevent mass atrocities, but it can do so only if alerted to the situations in time. Regular open debates within the Security Council on the responsibility to protect are to be encouraged, as are regular briefings by the Special Advisers of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and on the Responsibility to Protect. The Council would also benefit from regular briefings on mass atrocity situations by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Such measures can only serve to aid early-warning situations in which populations are at risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

With regard to the link between the Human Rights Council and the Security Council, Geneva-based institutions and mechanisms play an increasingly important role in preventing and responding to mass atrocity crimes. We encourage the informal dialogue that has taken place with a view to improving the use of the universal periodic review in that connection.

Ireland's strong peacekeeping tradition allows us to recognize the importance of United Nations peacekeeping operations as a vehicle for integrating responsibility-to-protect capacities. In line with the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians, peacekeepers need the requisite training and resources to adequately protect civilians. In that context, we encourage the integration of the United Nations Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes into the training of all United Nations peacekeeping staff.

The principle of the responsibility to protect is now widely accepted, yet concerns about its appropriate implementation continue to be debated. While debate is to be encouraged for so critical a concept, it must not be used as an excuse for passivity or inaction. The international community must stand firm against the incorrect application of the responsibility to protect through a broadening of its scope, its selective application or its malicious misapplication for a State's own strategic interests. The responsibility to protect does not lower the threshold for pre-emptive intervention or use of force. However, any ambiguity surrounding the operationalization of the concept must be addressed and agreed on so that it can be effectively implemented.

Ireland is deeply concerned about the worrying trend of the use of forced displacement as a military tactic by State and non-State actors and its disastrous consequences, particularly for minority populations. There is an undeniable connection between the current global crisis of forced displacement and the failure to uphold the responsibility to protect and prevent mass atrocity crimes.

As the Secretary-General states in his report, we have allowed disagreements about the past to foil our unity of purpose in the present. We continue to miss opportunities to save countless lives in situations we could and should have foreseen. Through the proper operationalization of the responsibility to protect, we can make major strides towards preventing instances of mass atrocities and loss of life.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): The convening of today's formal debate on the responsibility to protect is a milestone indeed, as it is the first such debate in the General Assembly since 2009. It is our hope that this debate will see an open and frank discussion, as it presents a unique opportunity for all Member States to put their views on record.

We thank the Secretary-General for his most recent report on the responsibility to protect (A/72/884), which points out that much more must be done by the international community to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, and sets out recommendations on how early warning can be improved. It also outlines a strategy for strengthening early action. I would like to make three points.

First, as the Secretary-General has reiterated in his report, the primary responsibility for the protection of civilian populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity rests with the State. National Governments cannot abdicate their responsibility to protect their own citizens. Instability and extremism flourish when the needs and aspirations of citizens are not met. Accordingly, human development is key and its link with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is very important. The onus is on each of us to implement the SDGs, in particular SDG 16, on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. We agree with the Secretary-General that inclusive and sustainable development is the best form of prevention against all kinds of risks, including atrocity crimes.

Secondly, international partnership and support are essential to improving national resilience. The United Nations, regional organizations and civil society must work with one another to support and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and create in each of our countries the necessary institutions and capacities for a resilient and inclusive society. Prevention is certainly better than cure. The priority must be to help countries ensure that the conditions for instability and conflict do not arise. And when they do, the international community must act collectively and in a spirit of solidarity.

That leads me to my third point. The international community must be prepared to take collective action to help address situations where crimes of atrocity have occurred. But to do so, it must act through the United Nations, as was made clear in paragraph 139 of the World Summit Outcome document, which our Heads of State and Government endorsed in 2005. Our leaders committed to taking such collective action through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations, as appropriate. In addition, such collective action should be undertaken only if peaceful means have proved to be inadequate and national authorities have manifestly failed to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Small States such as Singapore look to the Security Council to fulfil its global responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Unfortunately, we have seen the veto used too often in the past to prevent action to address atrocity crimes. We welcome the fact that two of the five permanent members of the Council have supported initiatives to limit the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. We call on the other permanent members to take a similar position by stating that they will refrain from using the veto to block Council action aimed at preventing or ending genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Such a collective commitment by the permanent members is essential if we are to signal the resolve of the Council and the international community to support the responsibility-to-protect agenda.

Ultimately, the responsibility to protect should be applied according to universally agreed principles and the Charter, particularly the principle of State sovereignty. The responsibility to protect is not a justification for intervention by external actors in the domestic affairs of sovereign States and should not be used as such. The reality is that deep concerns remain about the use of coercive or military measures against the will of Member States. We must address such concerns by building understanding, trust and confidence in the concept of the responsibility to protect. That can be done through continued dialogue among Member States, which is the reason for Singapore's support of the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the General Assembly.

The concept of the responsibility to protect must not be seen to be imposed by one group of countries on another, and neither should it be applied selectively or in a way that is seen as furthering the political agendas of some States. The primacy of the United Nations system must be maintained in the application of the responsibility to protect, and approval for any intervention must be duly authorized. Application of the responsibility to protect should not lead to unilateral action or be allowed to weaken the multilateral rules-based system. Through continued dialogue here in the General Assembly, we are confident that the international community can build trust and confidence and advance our collective efforts to prevent and defeat atrocity crimes.

Mr. Radomski (Poland): Let me first note that Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union (see A/72/PV.99).

Poland welcomes with satisfaction today's debate on the responsibility to protect. In 2009 we were a sponsor of the Assembly's resolution 63/308, its first stand-alone resolution on the responsibility to protect, and we declare our readiness to support that important concept wherever possible.

I would like to congratulate Australia and Ghana on their proposal to convene today's meeting and to welcome the Secretary-General's report entitled "Responsibility to protect: from early warning to early action" (A/72/884). There is no doubt that the key to effective preventive measures is early-warning capacity.

I want to focus on three issues that we believe are of crucial importance in today's timely debate: respect for international law, conflict prevention and accountability.

First, the international community should get back to principles. Respect for international law instruments, including the Charter of the United Nations, can be a true preventive factor in stopping mass atrocities. Poland raised that issue during its presidency of the Security Council last month and organized two open debates with the aim of promoting the basic rules of international law. We all had the opportunity to listen to more than 160 statements calling for respect for international law. We should be true to our words and fully comply with the existing set of norms and standards. We cannot shy away from being vocal when laws are broken.

The second issue is conflict prevention. Using the right combination of carefully tailored measures is crucial. Preventive action should be focused on specific regions. Measures are most effective when they are individualized and aimed at specific problems. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Local ownership is critical, and early action succeeds only if it has the support of those who should benefit from it. Local, community-level engagement must be further integrated into preventive action.

Third is accountability. We must not allow those who commit atrocities to feel they are immune to prosecution. There is no peace without justice. We are morally, politically and legally obliged to comply with existing measures aimed at ending impunity, ensuring accountability and achieving justice for the victims. The Security Council — but also the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council — should continue to consider ways to make better use of existing tools to strengthen accountability for international crimes. We have at our disposal sanctions, arms embargoes, fact-finding missions, independent mechanisms for collecting and storing evidence, commissions of inquiry and justice mechanisms, including international and hybrid courts and tribunals. Everything should be done to ensure that they are used effectively.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that we must renew the commitment that our leaders made at the 2005 World Summit in order to help States build their capacity to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and assist those who are under stress before crisis and conflict break out. The responsibility to protect is not an abstract concept. Implementing it means saving the lives of people who have been left without protection or hope. We should do our best to let them lead their lives without suffering.

Mr. Ham Sang Wook (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening the first formal meeting of the General Assembly on the responsibility to protect, and to express our appreciation to Australia and Ghana for their leadership in including this topic on the agenda of the General Assembly. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his personal commitment and conviction to the principle and to welcome his report, entitled "Responsibility to protect: from early warning to early action" (A/72/884), with its ongoing focus on prevention, which follows that of last year (A/71/1016).

Since world leaders made their commitment to the concept of the responsibility to protect at the historic 2005 World Summit, we have made considerable progress in the area. The Secretary-General has provided Member States with an annual report since 2009 and appointed a Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect. For their part, Member States have participated annually in General Assembly informal dialogues on the occasion of the Secretary-General's report and have decided to include the issue of the responsibility to protect on the

Assembly's agenda. Furthermore, 60 Member States have joined the Global Network of R2P Focal Points, while 50 are working together as members of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect in New York and Geneva. However, while acknowledging the great strides that have been made in past years, we must also recognize that there is still a gap between our desire to protect vulnerable populations and the reality on the ground. We should be alarmed by the details in the report of the Secretary-General, which states that battle-related deaths have increased tenfold since 2005 and the number of people forcibly displaced has reached record levels. In that regard, I would like to highlight three points with regard to the responsibility to protect, while bearing in mind the recommendations outlined in the Secretary-General's report.

First, we must continue to improve existing early-warning mechanisms at the domestic, regional and international levels and strengthen synergies among them to make the prevention of atrocities a practical programme. As the Secretary-General points out in his report, the international community's capacity for early warning and atrocity-crime risk assessment has improved considerably in recent years. There are a variety of useful tools across the United Nations system, regional and subregional arrangements and structures such as the United Nations Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes and the Human Rights Up Front initiative. We must redouble our efforts to improve effective communication and consolidate more systematic approaches to early-warning signs.

Secondly, no matter how effectively early-warning mechanisms work, the responsibility to protect cannot be realized if their results are not followed by early action. The Security Council has a special responsibility for preventing atrocity crimes, mandated by the 2005 World Summit Outcome. In that regard, as a supporter of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, and of the political declaration by France and Mexico, the Republic of Korea is of the view that the use of the veto should be limited in situations where immediate action is required in response to mass atrocity crimes. We must also make better use of the tools of the United Nations human rights system, such as the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review and special procedures, among others, which can help identify possible risks early on and facilitate relevant action by national Governments as well as the international community.

Thirdly, we must continue our efforts to end impunity and ensure accountability for atrocity crimes in every corner of the world, since strengthening accountability is one of the principal ways to prevent such crimes. It is imperative to ensure that violators of international law are held accountable for their crimes through prosecution in national and international criminal justice systems, including the International Criminal Court. In that regard, I would also like to emphasize that justice mechanisms must strengthen their engagement with civil society, given that it can be a crucial ally in enhancing their ability to gain access to critical information, as well as in strengthening contacts with victims and witnesses.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the Republic of Korea to the responsibility to protect. I look forward to continuing to work with other Member States with a view to helping to protect vulnerable people from acts that the international community as a whole has condemned as the most egregious crimes.

Mr. Yaakob (Malaysia): I want to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening today's plenary meeting, which enables all Member States to deliberate and exchange frank views on the report of the Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect, as contained in document A/72/884.

As the General Assembly agreed last year, the inclusion of the issue of the responsibility to protect on the Assembly's agenda underlines the principled commitment of the United Nations to the prevention of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. According to the Secretary-General's report, the number of people killed in conflicts has risen tenfold since the 2005 World Summit. Such negative trends pose a serious threat to international peace and security, as situations involving atrocity crimes can generate lasting instability both within and across borders. My delegation shares the Secretary-General's view that it is important for us to continue building a world based on the rule of law with strong multilateral institutions, which can protect its people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. My delegation also joins other Member States in acknowledging the noble intentions of the concept of the responsibility to protect, which are to ensure that the unspeakable tragedies that have occurred and are currently occurring in various parts of the world will never recur.

Malaysia has been closely following the deliberations on the issue of the responsibility to protect and the follow-up dialogue sessions since the World Summit in 2005. My delegation notes that a divergence of opinions continues to persist among Member States on the concept, understanding and implementation of the responsibility to protect, especially with regard to State sovereignty and an international mandate to act. Malaysia sincerely hopes that we can quickly resolve that disagreement in order to respond effectively to atrocities and prevent more genocides.

Malaysia believes that non-military solutions should always be the first option, because military interventions can only cause further human catastrophe. We will continue to support the use of various non-military measures in efforts to respond to and prevent the escalation of atrocity crimes, including mediation, monitoring, observer and fact-finding missions, commissions of inquiry and public advocacy by international officials.

Nevertheless, in addressing atrocity crimes committed by non-State armed groups, we acknowledge the emergence of new challenges, particularly those related to the impact of new technologies. Some modifications in the preventive and protective strategies of all stakeholders may be required in that regard, and Malaysia stands ready to work closely with other Member States, regional organizations and civil society in addressing, anticipating, preventing and responding to such emerging threats and challenges. My delegation notes that the international community's capacity for early warning and assessment of atrocity-crime risks has significantly improved over the past few years. Malaysia also sees merit in the three strategies outlined in the Secretary-General's report for strengthening early action and early warning, which include reviewing and strengthening existing preventive capacities, promoting accountability and innovating by expanding civilian action for atrocity prevention.

In that context, my delegation supports the idea that prevention must become the rule rather than the exception. The Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and regional and subregional organizations can all enhance their contributions to the prevention of atrocity crimes by demonstrating a greater willingness to consider and respond to the earliest signs of risk. In that respect, we join others in calling for restraint in the use of the veto in the Security Council, especially in cases of atrocity crimes. For practical reasons, Malaysia is of the view that the exercise of the veto should be regulated so as to enable the international community to act promptly to save innocent people from brutal atrocities.

In principle, Malaysia welcomes the noble intentions that the responsibility to protect is intended to accomplish. Nevertheless, we want to reiterate that it requires continued, in-depth discussions to enable the international community to clearly define its understanding, applications, implementation and effects on States on both the international and internal fronts. Only through all Member States' complete understanding and systematic application of the responsibility to protect do we believe that we can truly accept it as an international norm. To that end, Malaysia stands ready to work closely with the United Nations and its Member States in developing options to strengthen civilian action to prevent atrocity crimes.

Mr. Skinner-Kleé Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this plenary meeting to address the responsibility to protect, a topic of special importance. It is taking place in a international context fraught with controversy that demands that we strengthen the humanitarian and international security norm conceived during the 2005 World Summit with a view to preventing the worst kinds of war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

In the twentieth century, we witnessed the degeneration of animosity and extreme nationalism into cruel and degrading treatment during the two great international conflagrations, resulting in frightful and brutal crimes against entire populations, all based on the common denominators of hatred and intolerance. With time, the international community, represented in the United Nations, has codified an international system that prioritizes human rights law, international law and international humanitarian law. The Assembly has acknowledged that every State, as a society organized on the basis of laws, bears the primary responsibility for protecting its population and preventing atrocities such as those we have witnessed in the past. That underscores the genesis and relevance of the responsibility to protect through its fulfilment today, a precept that is supported through the fundamental purpose of the Charter of the United Nations, which is both preventing the scourge of war and promoting peace among peoples and nations.

From our perspective, the responsibility to protect is a norm that fully corresponds to our constitutional principles, as the State of Guatemala was established and founded to protect individuals and families, and its supreme purpose is achieving the common good. In the year that marks the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the responsibility to protect must be recognized as an exemplary way to protect and defend populations from mass atrocities. It must therefore be strengthened, especially with the advent of new hotspots, where we are unfortunately seeing similar patterns that in the worst cases involve new crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. In such instances, the Security Council must act urgently and make effective use of its methods of work and strategies to prevent further acts of genocide or crimes against humanity, in accordance with its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. In that regard, my delegation is proud to be part of the code of conduct initiative of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, aimed at preventing the use of the veto in the Security Council in cases of genocide and crimes against humanity, and we urge other States to join in supporting it.

We therefore reiterate our call for upholding international obligations under international law, human rights law and refugee law, since protecting the civilian population is an intrinsic part of them. In that regard, Guatemala prides itself as a contributing country to United Nations peacekeeping in support of the protection of civilians. We affirm that the principle of the responsibility to protect is complemented by the concept of sustainable peace, which prioritizes respect for human rights, all based on a preventive approach with a view to avoiding hostile confrontations.

Speaking in our national capacity, we would like to say how pleased we are that the responsibility to protect is on the agenda of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session, underscoring our political will to see the issue discussed here. Accordingly, we support the inclusion of this item on the General Assembly's permanent agenda, as a logical forum in which to discuss its implementation as an exemplary mechanism for protecting civilian populations from atrocities and assuring them of their enjoyment of their human rights.

In conclusion, and based on our own experience, we would like to take this opportunity to express our rejection of and revulsion at practices that, while they may not constitute genocide or crimes against humanity, are certainly related to disrespect for basic human rights, specifically the human rights of highly vulnerable people such as migrant families and their young children. We have watched dumbfounded in the past few weeks as families and children have been inhumanely and perversely separated from their parents, a practice that has traumatic consequences for children, leaving them in a situation of extreme vulnerability and at risk for severe psychological and emotional damage, with total disregard for their inalienable rights as human beings. We call for an end to such practices, which recall inhumane episodes of the past.

Mrs. Okey-Uche (Nigeria): I thank the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for their important statements (see A/72/PV.99), and Australia and Ghana for seeing to it that the responsibility to protect is taking its rightful place on the agenda today. I also want to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/72/884) entitled "Responsibility to protect: from early warning to early action". Indeed, early warning and early action could save the world from many of the disasters we are currently experiencing. We therefore agree with the recommendations in the report and encourage everyone to see that they are implemented.

It has been nine years since the last — and first — formal General Assembly debate on the responsibility to protect in 2009 (see A/63/PV.97 to A/63/PV.101). My delegation believes that the time is indeed ripe to reaffirm our support for the commitments we made at the 2005 World Summit with regard to the responsibility to protect. With particular reference to paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1), Nigeria would like to take this opportunity to call for the full implementation of all three pillars of the norm by reviewing and strengthening existing preventive capacities where necessary, continuing to encourage and promote accountability for atrocity prevention, and innovating by expanding civilian action for atrocity prevention and drawing on all available resources to meet the pressing challenges.

The disturbing trend of mass atrocity crimes has continued around the world, and it requires that we work together at the national, regional and global levels to halt the problem. We must get to the root of all the issues ravaging our peoples, most especially civilians, who are too often targeted. Some of the challenges identified are weak structures and institutions, which should be addressed. In that regard, we must enhance multilateral cooperation in order to strengthen States' capacities to deal with threats posed by violent conflicts and crimes against humanity.

We urge the Security Council to make even greater use of its situational-awareness briefings and the Arria Formula mechanism, and to invite more briefers in order to achieve greater effectiveness in preventing mass atrocities through early warning and early action. Furthermore, by strengthening cooperation with the Human Rights Council, the Security Council could achieve even greater gains in areas where populations are at risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity. Nigeria also believes that it is important to note the hard work of the Secretary-General's Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect and to commend their efforts so far. We also want to take this opportunity to urge all Member States to uphold their obligations under international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law, which underpin the commitment to the responsibility to protect. In that regard, we encourage Member States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide to do so without further delay.

Another important area is the need for stronger judicial institutions within States and cooperation between States. Nigeria is a signatory to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which, incidentally, will celebrate its twentieth anniversary on 17 July and remains an undeniably important body in the battle to end impunity for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We are also pleased to note that eight of the current 14 United Nations peacekeeping operations have protection-of-civilian mandates, and that the responsibility to protect has been referenced directly in a number of those mandates by the Security Council, including in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan.

Another terrible source of harm to civilians in conflict has been the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as the Security Council has recognized in its resolutions 2274 (2016), 2283 (2016), 2296 (2016) and 2313 (2016). Every region of the world has suffered from the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, particularly Africa. We must make use of international instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty, as they can contribute greatly to protecting civilians and preventing mass atrocities. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has helped fuel the terrorist activities of Boko Haram in the north-east of Nigeria. Though it has been seriously decimated, Boko Haram, through its lone-wolf attacks, is still a challenge that we are dealing with.

Nigeria condemns the growing number of deliberate attacks on civilians, humanitarian workers, journalists and peacekeepers across the world, which have occurred everywhere, in markets, hospitals and schools. In that regard, and as a demonstration of our commitment to the cause and in line with the Secretary-General's earlier recommendations, Nigeria has appointed a national focal point for the responsibility to protect and set up a presidential committee on small arms and light weapons to tackle the issue of their proliferation. The Nigerian Army has also set up a human rights desk to ensure that military operations respect their rules of engagement. Furthermore, the Nigerian Government has taken major steps to enhance security at camps for internally displaced people in order to reduce their vulnerability and promote their eventual safe return to their homes and reintegration into society.

Nigeria has also gone far with demining activities, the removal of improvised explosive devices and the provision of military escorts for humanitarian workers. In order to further forestall situations that could lead to mass atrocity crimes, we have set up a presidential initiative for the north-east. It is a comprehensive recovery blueprint that integrates all actors and actions in a coordinated set of activities aimed at north-eastern Nigeria's rapid recovery from the havoc caused by the Boko Haram insurgents. The Nigerian Government has also launched a safe schools initiative to provide safe education in conflict-affected areas of the north-east and has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, under which we are committed to implementing the guidelines for protecting schools and universities from military use during armed conflict. Narratives that support violence are also being countered in schools, with ongoing efforts to deradicalize convicted or repentant terrorists by deploying emergency teams of psychosocial counsellors and health professionals. Work is also being done with the communities affected through various economic revitalization programmes aimed at the people most affected by terrorism and violent extremism.

In conclusion, we all have a responsibility to protect one another, which is why we are united as nations. Our hope is that we will collectively identify implementable strategies that can effectively prevent atrocities and protect populations around the world. We believe we are on the right track.

Mr. Gad (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the Secretariat for organizing this meeting. I would also like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report (A/72/884) on the responsibility to protect and on the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. I would like to address the following points with regard to the subject of today's meeting.

The delegation of Egypt reaffirms that the basic responsibility for protecting nations from grave crimes falls to Member States, and that the national and international work to prevent those crimes must be based on supporting national efforts to expose and prevent such crimes by national law-enforcement bodies in conflict and post-conflict situations. The implementation of the concept of the responsibility to protect is a basic responsibility of States. It is important to ensure respect for the principles of international law, particularly those of the sovereignty and equality of States. In that regard, I would like to emphasize that the role of the international community should be limited to a complementary one helping States to fulfil their commitments. International interventions should be an exceptional measure of last resort, and should be conducted in full compliance with the Charter of the United Nations. We also stress the importance of ensuring that the concept is not allowed to expand during implementation.

Egypt would like to emphasize the importance of respecting the hierarchy of the implementation of the norm's pillars. We cannot move from one pillar to another until the possibilities of the first have been completely exhausted. The first pillar is Member States' inherent responsibility for protecting their civilians from severe violations. The second consists in the effort to use all possible diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful ways to protect people from atrocities before seeking the international community's assistance in adopting a collective position that accords with the Charter of the United Nations, including Chapter VII. In that regard, we would like to reaffirm that as far as the responsibility to protect is concerned, any international strategy must have the broad support of Member States in order to exclude any doubts about the impartiality of those strategies or the possibility that they could be seen as a way to interfere in a State's internal affairs. We must therefore avoid relying on initiatives or strategies that do not enjoy consensus and that have been developed outside intergovernmental frameworks, including the Human Rights Up Front initiative and the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes.

While we agree with the noble objectives on which the concept of the responsibility to protect is based, and remain committed to the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1), including paragraphs 138 and 139, the problem is the concept's ambiguity. Its essence is still an expanded political concept, and it is not yet a specifically designated legal concept, so that the scope of its applicability is not yet defined. Considering those basic political and legal gaps in the concept of the responsibility to protect, we believe we still need more time for dialogue and discussions in order to respond to the concerns of all Member States and address those gaps. We should establish a clear perception that enjoys consensus. We cannot possibly begin to develop a mechanism for implementing the responsibility to protect before we have a clear and specific definition of the concept itself. In that respect, and in line with our belief in the importance of a dialogue on this issue, Egypt has participated constructively and positively in the meetings of the relevant informal interactive dialogue of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, it is clear from all of this that we still have a lot of work to do in order to clarify this concept and ensure that it complies with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. We believe that this clarification is essential if we are to include the responsibility to protect as an item on the agenda of the General Assembly. We therefore oppose its inclusion on the agenda without developing and agreeing on a specific definition. In that respect, we hope to continue the informal interactive dialogue in order to close the legal and political gaps with regard to the concept before including it on the agenda of the General Assembly or taking any steps towards its implementation.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium associates itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union, as well as that made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect (see A/72/PV.99). I would now like to make a few comments in my national capacity.

Belgium welcomes the holding of this formal debate on the responsibility to protect, the first in almost 10 years. During the 2005 World Summit, all Heads of State and Government of Member States agreed to protect their peoples from the crime of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. They also decided to take action in order to uphold that responsibility. At a time when the victims of mass atrocities continue to number in the thousands, it is more than ever our duty not to forget those commitments. This meeting and our discussions today are certainly a step in that direction. In 2005, our representatives also stressed that the General Assembly should continue to consider the responsibility to protect and its implications. I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Australia and Ghana for proposing almost a year ago now that this item be included on the Assembly's agenda during the current session.

We are obviously aware of the differences in approach to the practical implementation of the responsibility to protect. That pertains in particular the second and third pillars of the concept, which are an integral part of the commitments we have made. However, it is precisely the fact that the approaches differ that should encourage us to maintain a continuing dialogue on the subject. That is why Belgium fully supports the proposal already made by other delegations that the issue of the responsibility to protect be included as a permanent item on the agenda of the Assembly.

I would like to welcome the Secretary-General's latest report on the responsibility to protect (A/72/884). The emphasis on prevention and the primary responsibility of States for protecting people from atrocity crimes is paramount. State sovereignty is not an obstacle to the responsibility to protect. On the contrary, they are two mutually reinforcing concepts.

As the Secretary-General underscored in his report, the United Nations system already has many tools at its disposal to identify early-warning signs of situations that could lead to atrocity crimes. I am thinking in particular of the special procedures established by the Human Rights Council, but also of the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. Early-warning systems could include, for example, regular meetings at which the Special Advisers of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect could present the information they collect to the Security Council and other relevant United Nations bodies and make recommendations for concrete action. In any case, the role of the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect is crucial, which is why Belgium urges the Secretary-General to appoint a successor as soon as possible to Mr. Šimonović, whose outstanding work we commend.

While essential, prevention is unfortunately not enough. In that regard, I would again refer to the 2005 World Summit Outcome document (resolution 60/1). The World Summit participants stated at the time that when States are unable to fulfil their responsibility to protect their people or when a country's national authorities have clearly failed to protect their people, the international community must take action. More specifically, at the Summit the Member States highlighted the role that the Security Council could play in certain cases. In that regard, Belgium believes that the Council should ensure that the protection of civilians is given priority in the mandates of peacekeeping operations. In the same spirit, the aspects related to the rule of law in the mandates of political and peacekeeping missions should also be strengthened and systematized, taking into account the specific situations of each mission.

Combating impunity must also be a priority. That responsibility falls first and foremost to each State. It means that they have an obligation to prosecute the perpetrators of the most serious crimes, wherever they may be, in order to ensure that they do not escape justice. States that have not yet ratified the most recent version of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court should do so. However, the Security Council must also strengthen its support to national judicial procedures and hybrid mechanisms, as well as the International Criminal Court, particularly with regard to the situations it has referred to it. In view of the Council's failure to act, we also welcome the role played by the General Assembly in creating the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. Finally, when mass atrocities occur, the Security Council must not allow disagreements among its permanent members to result in inaction. Its credibility as a key actor in maintaining international peace and security is at stake. That is why Belgium supports the initiative of France and Mexico to regulate the right of the veto in the event of atrocity crimes, and why we also support the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group.

In conclusion, the commitments we made in 2005 with regard to the responsibility to protect are ambitious. In the past few years, the annual reports of the Secretary-General, several General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the work of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, the tools and instruments developed at the national and regional levels and the activities of many civil-society organizations have all contributed to a better understanding of how we can implement that responsibility. It is time to begin a new chapter and take action so that we can avoid continually mourning new tragedies.

The Acting President: The representative of India has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Bayyapu (India): While we are having this serious debate for the first time in a decade on an issue that is important to all of us, we have seen one delegation yet again misuse this platform to make an unwarranted reference to the situation in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Such cynical attempts have failed in the past and have no support in this body.

I would like to place it on record and reiterate that the state of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral and inalienable part of India. No amount of empty rhetoric from Pakistan will change that reality.

The Acting President: We will hear the remaining speakers in the debate on Tuesday, 2 July at 10 a.m. in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

United Nations A/72/PV.101

General Assembly

Seventy-second session

Official Records

101st plenary meeting

Tuesday, 26 June 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák .... (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 118

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/840)

Draft resolution (A/72/L.62)

The President: I would like to inform members that, as mentioned in my letter dated 25 June 2018, action on draft resolution A/72/L.62 will be taken immediately after I deliver my statement, following which we will have a debate on the agenda item.

This is the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and the level of activity and participation that we have seen over the past few weeks shows that the Strategy is as crucial as ever. I want to begin by thanking our two committed facilitators, Ambassadors Kai Sauer of Finland and Sima Sami Bahous of Jordan. I also want to acknowledge all the work that Member States put into this process — through both their diplomats here in New York and their delegations that travelled from their capitals. As we are about to adopt the latest draft resolution on the Strategy, I wish to make three points.

First, I want to reiterate that the Global Strategy is not a global solution. The document is not a magic formula, and it is certainly not a rule book. This is so because terrorism is very complex. It is not linked to any country, religion or ethnicity. It changes depending on the period, month or year, geographic location and terrorist group. That is why a one-size-fits-all approach will never work and why the Strategy does not attempt to create one.

Every country and Government will respond to terrorism in its own way, but no single country can ever be immune to terrorism, nor can any single country ever hold all the answers, which is why international cooperation is vital. We will be stronger if we work together, and the Strategy provides us with an opportunity to do so. It sets our common goals, allows us to prioritize and gives us an overarching vision for the future. The Secretary-General's report (A/72/840) and today's General Assembly debate are also valuable tools. They allow us to keep our finger on the pulse of the issue, learn from national experiences and hear one another's views and concerns.

My second point today concerns the relationship between the United Nations and counter-terrorism. We cannot skirt the issue; we need to address it head on. Frankly, the United Nations role with regard to counter-terrorism is a tricky one. The phenomenon did not exist when the Charter of the United Nations was signed. The Organization has therefore had to adapt — and quickly. Nearly 17 years ago, a few miles from here, something happened that changed the course of our history. The events of 11 September were not the beginning of terrorism, but they marked, I believe, the first time the world really understood the scale of the threat. Since then, we have been working to find the appropriate role for the United Nations and achieve the right balance in the steps it takes.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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We need to keep working on this effort. But the simple fact is that the need is there. Many Member States are actively seeking United Nations support. The United Nations counter-terrorism framework is doing some very valuable work, from building the capacity of youth groups to preventing violent extremism and developing practical guidelines for national authorities. In addition, work has been done within our own system to streamline and evolve. Thanks to the reform initiative of the Secretary-General, we have a new United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office, which means that there is now one address for people to turn to, and it has taken on the much-needed coordination tasks.

My third point is more of a warning. We cannot afford to underestimate the threat facing us. We all have read the reports. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has lost a great deal of territory. It is in a much weaker position now than it was when we last reviewed the Strategy (see A/71/PV.94). If this were a traditional battle, therefore, we could say that ISIL was losing it. But this is the thing: terrorism is nothing like regular warfare. ISIL, Al-Qaida and their affiliates have shown that they do not represent a traditional security threat. They use methods that we could have imagined only in our worst nightmares. They have broken all the laws of humankind. They have proved themselves to be able to adapt to new contexts and situations.

We therefore cannot afford to become complacent. The danger will persist, and, as before, it will change with time. There will be new dynamics, technology and threats, but also new opportunities for solutions. We need to stay on top of all of that. We need to work with one another. We need to compare and contrast. We need to pool our capacities and experiences. And we need to deliver a strong message that we do not and will not accept international terrorism.

What better place to deliver that message than this Hall? In the General Assembly, every member State has a voice, which sometimes makes for lengthy processes — experts here know exactly what I am talking about — but our outcomes are legitimate, and our voice loud. I therefore thank everyone for being here today. Let us make sure that the Strategy is implemented on the ground, and let us continue to raise our voices together against terrorism.

The Assembly will now turn to draft resolution A/72/L.62, entitled "The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review". In order to ensure the smooth conduct of proceedings and seize the momentum of consensus on the draft resolution, any delegation wishing to make an explanation of position is kindly encouraged to do so in his or her statement to be delivered in the debate. We shall now proceed to consider the draft resolution.

Before giving the floor for explanations of position before taking action on the draft resolution, may I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): The draft resolution on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review (A/72/L.62) should guide global efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism, not become yet another vehicle to unjustly criticize Israel at the United Nations. The United States cannot accept the divisive reference to foreign occupation in the thirty-sixth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. This reference to foreign occupation serves to justify terrorist acts, which are categorically unacceptable under any circumstances, and undermines Member States' legitimate right to self-defence. Accordingly, the United States dissociates itself from consensus on the thirty-sixth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. We must reject all terrorist acts, not pick and choose which forms and manifestations are criminal or unjustifiable. There is no excuse for terrorism.

Mrs. Furman (Israel): I would like to thank the facilitators and their dedicated teams and express my appreciation for the hard work invested in draft resolution A/72/L.62. Israel understands the enormous efforts that were put into this process and recognizes the extremely difficult negotiations that have gone on for the past few weeks. We participated in all the negotiation sessions and meetings just as we did two years ago, when we negotiated the previous review of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

I would like to remind the Assembly that, two years ago, resolution 70/291 took into consideration the red lines of all delegations, except one — the red line of my delegation. Two years ago, we made it clear that we could not accept the thirty-third preambular paragraph as it serves as a justification of terrorism and singles out one country (see A/70/PV.110). We therefore dissociated ourselves from the thirty-third preambular paragraph of resolution 70/291 two years ago, and put on the official record that we today disassociate ourselves once again from the analogous thirty-sixth preambular paragraph of this year's draft resolution.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take a decision on A/72/L.62, entitled "The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt it?

Draft resolution A/72/L.62 was adopted (resolution 72/284).

The President: I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassadors Sima Sami Bahous of Jordan and Kai Sauer of Finland, who, in co-facilitating the informal consultations, demonstrated great ability and patience in the conduct of the discussions and complex negotiations on the draft resolution. I also thank Member States for their valuable contributions to reaching an agreement on the draft resolution.

We will now hear statements after the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Sauer (Finland): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for entrusting me and my fellow co-facilitator, Ambassador Sima Sami Bahous, Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, with the important responsibility of facilitating the sixth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on your behalf. This has been a long, challenging, but also exciting and important process that highlighted the General Assembly's crucial role in uniting the international community against the international threat of terrorism. As co-facilitators, Ambassador Bahous and I would like to thank all delegations for their invaluable efforts, flexibility and dedication to this crucial subject. This has been a common effort. The cooperation, joint determination, unity and solidarity of the Assembly and the United Nations are the only ways to work in order to defeat the scourge of terrorism. This was the first review to be conducted after the establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and the Office of Counter-Terrorism for their strong technical support to our facilitation.

As the Secretary-General stated this spring in his report on the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/72/840), terrorism is now one of the most profound challenges of our time. No country is immune to its threat, and no country can address the challenge alone. The Secretary-General also highlighted the fact that terrorism, and the need to find effective ways to counter it, is indeed one issue that truly brings the entire international community together. As co-facilitators, we fully share the Secretary-General's view. During the facilitation, we were encouraged to note that despite the differences in their views, all Member States worked towards a common goal. A consensus outcome of the review of the Global Strategy is critically important and very valuable. I would like to highlight a few key features of the consultative process.

After our appointment last year, we began to consult delegations on their general positions. In February, March and April we held numerous bilateral meetings with missions and regional groups in order to better understand their priorities, concerns and positions. We held our first informal meeting on 15 May, after which intensive negotiations took place at the expert level. The text of resolution 72/284, which we have in front of us today, was finalized and submitted to you on Friday last week, Mr. President.

Our first step in the process focused on restructuring the draft resolution in order to make it more coherent and logical. We appreciate the fact that this technical change was well received by Member States, and that the draft resolution now better reflects the structure of the initial Global Strategy and its four pillars. We hope that this practical modification will help future review processes in making the draft resolution a relevant guide for Member States in their international efforts to counter terrorism.

As this has been a shared endeavour, I would now like to hand things over to my co-facilitator, Ambassador Bahous, to complete our shared statement. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate her and wish her a happy birthday.

The President: I join the representative of Finland in congratulating the representative of Jordan.

Ms. Bahous (Jordan): I would like to join my colleague Ambassador Sauer, the Permanent Representative of Finland, in thanking you, Mr. President, for having entrusted us with the important task of facilitating the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy. As facilitators, and always cognizant of the complexity and urgency of the threat of terrorism and the dire need to come together as an international community to combat it, we tried to steer the negotiations so as to reflect the most urgent threats and trends in international counter-terrorism. During our first reading, we identified a number of topics that required deeper discussions than others. Those discussions were conducted in small groups led by different delegations. All delegations showed great dedication to the discussions and an unrelenting commitment to reaching common ground, despite certain differences and very short timelines. We believe that the work in small groups enhanced the transparency and inclusiveness of the process. We would like to express our deep appreciation to all delegations that led or participated in the small-group discussions and to thank them heartily for their efforts.

The small groups discussed and streamlined language related to the issues of the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture and capacity-building; civil society and gender; countering the financing of terrorism; victims of terrorism; information and communications technology and counter-narratives; and threats and trends related to foreign terrorist fighters. One of the key discussions focused on the prevention of violent extremism as and when it is conducive to terrorism. Member States spent long hours in good-faith negotiations in an effort to make progress on the language of the fifth review (resolution 70/291). No compromise, however, was reached on updating the language related to the prevention of violent extremism. The important compromise reached two years ago was therefore reverted to and maintained. We also reached compromises on many important issues, including on the relocation of foreign terrorist fighters, countering the financing of terrorism, supporting the victims of terrorism and countering terrorist narratives.

As all member States agree that the United Nations is the only global platform for enhancing our multilateral response to the phenomenon of terrorism, it was essential to ensure that resolution 72/284 recognized the establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism. As facilitators and member States, we share the same conviction that its establishment represents a timely opportunity to streamline and coordinate our work in the most efficient and effective manner possible. The overall process, I must say, was intense and seemed endless, but Member States ultimately succeeded in introducing significant updates to the draft resolution. We included 29 new paragraphs, made amendments to 15 and deleted five.

The threat of terrorism and violent extremism is a direct assault on the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Indeed, it is an assault on humankind, and it undermines our collective efforts to maintain peace and security, foster sustainable development, promote respect for human rights and deliver vital humanitarian aid. Protecting human rights and respecting the rule of law while countering terrorism is not just a matter of principle. It is essential to the legitimacy and efficacy of counter-terrorism measures. When we fail to uphold the values that unite us, we fuel the grievances that can lead to terrorism. We would like to thank all the delegations for their invaluable efforts and dedication to this essential issue. A consensus on countering terrorism sends a resounding message about the unity and solidarity of the General Assembly and demonstrates that we can overcome whatever differences we may have in our concerted efforts to defeat the scourge of terrorism in all its forms and shapes.

As co-facilitators, we realize that the sixth review is not perfect, but we have collectively taken steps that bring us closer to realizing our ultimate goal of effectively countering terrorism. Our collective drive must continue, and our focus must remain on what brings us together, not on what sets us apart. That is the only way to ensure a better, safer world free of terrorism. I am sure everyone here agrees.

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to take the floor on behalf of the 120 States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) during this plenary meeting, at which we have adopted by consensus resolution 72/284, renewing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

At the outset, on behalf of the States members of the Movement, I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Jordan and their teams, in their capacity as co-facilitators of the sixth review process, for the transparency and inclusiveness with which they conducted the long and complex rounds of negotiations. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/72/840) on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which we have duly noted.

The Non-Aligned Movement is fully committed to the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and considers that scourge to be one of the most serious dangers and threats to international peace and security facing us now. We should emphasize that any act of terrorism is criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of motive and wherever, whenever and by whomever it is committed. Terrorist acts are some of the most flagrant violations of international law today, including international humanitarian and human rights law, and in particular of the right to life, as they deprive people of the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Such acts endanger the territorial integrity and stability of States, as well as national, regional and international security, and they destabilize legitimately constituted Governments and States' prevailing constitutional order and political unity.

However, we cannot overemphasize how important it is to keep in mind that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any particular religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group, and that such attributions should not be used to justify terrorism or counter-terrorism measures. Nor should terrorism be equated with the legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial or foreign domination or occupation for self-determination and national liberation. We should continue to denounce the brutal treatment of people under foreign occupation, since that is the gravest form of terrorism, and to condemn the use of State power for repressing or brutalizing people who are fighting foreign occupation in exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination. In that regard, and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, the struggle of peoples under colonial or foreign domination or occupation for self-determination and national liberation does not constitute terrorism.

During the eighteenth Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Baku in April, ministers affirmed and underscored the validity and relevance of the Movement's principled position on terrorism and reiterated their respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, the States members of the Movement would like to take this opportunity to note that while 12 years have passed since the General Assembly's adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, in 2006, there is still much to do in our shared duty to fight terrorism as responsible members of the international community and to establish a peaceful and prosperous world in the interest of our nations and peoples, especially in today's context when, among other things, we are dealing with the threat of foreign terrorist fighters who are returning or relocating from conflict zones to their countries of origin or residence, or who are deploying to a third country.

We therefore believe it is particularly important to comprehensively address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Experience shows us that terrorist groups are inspired by, among other things, despair, injustice, frustration, a lack of opportunity and the denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms in promoting their criminal agenda, which is based on hatred, intolerance, sectarianism and extremism. Poverty, social and economic inequalities, political, ethnic and religious intolerance and conflicts, as well as the imposition of unilateral coercive measures, colonial or foreign domination or occupation, and violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of peoples and nations, are some of the so-called drivers of terrorism. They must be addressed comprehensively if we want to totally eliminate the scourge of terrorism in both the short and the long term. NAM member States therefore call for transparent, comprehensive and balanced implementation of the efforts of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and support every initiative aimed at enhancing the Strategy's full and effective implementation.

The Non-Aligned Movement is determined to take speedy and effective measures to eliminate international terrorism, and in that context we urge all States, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to fulfil their obligations in the fight against terrorism under international law and international humanitarian law by prosecuting or, where appropriate, extraditing the perpetrators of terrorist acts, and preventing the organization, instigation or financing of terrorist acts against other States from within or outside their territories or by organizations based in their territories. They should also refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting, financing or participating in terrorist acts on the territories of other States, encouraging activities within their territories directed at the commission of such acts, allowing their territories to be used for planning, training or financing such acts or supplying arms or other weapons that could be used for terrorist acts in other States.

The States members of the Movement also categorically condemn and refrain from extending any form of political, diplomatic, moral or material support for terrorism. In that context, we urge all States, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and their obligations under international law, to ensure that refugee status or any other legal status is not abused by the perpetrators, organizers or facilitators of terrorist acts and that their claims to political motives are not recognized as grounds for refusing requests for their extradition. The NAM member States also urge all States, in accordance with their obligations under applicable international law and the Charter, to deny safe haven and bring to justice — or, where appropriate, extradite, based on the principle of extradition or prosecution — the perpetrators of terrorist acts or anyone who supports, facilitates, participates or attempts to participate in the financing, planning or preparation of terrorist acts, while stressing the importance of holding accountable those responsible for or involved in carrying out or facilitating terrorist activities.

The financing of terrorism is also a matter for serious concern that must be fought with determination. In that regard, we emphasize the obligation of member States to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts and to criminalize the purposeful provision or collection of funds by their nationals or in their territories by any means, direct or indirect, with the intention or knowledge that they will be used in order to carry out terrorist acts. We also want to note the increasing and acknowledged potential links between transnational organized crime and the financing of terrorism, including money-laundering, and therefore stress the importance of promoting cooperation and coordinating efforts in combating such criminal activities.

The Non-Aligned Movement emphasizes that it is essential to address the threat posed by terrorist narratives and that in that regard, the international community should work on developing a better understanding of how terrorists motivate others to commit terrorist acts or recruit them, and devise more effective ways to counter terrorist propaganda, incitement and recruitment, including through the Internet, in compliance with the relevant provisions of international law, international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law. The States members of the Movement take this opportunity to stress the importance of a preventive approach in this important fight. We underscore the significance of not only addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, but also of developing effective and innovative initiatives aimed at undermining the strategy of extremist groups and ideologies that promote violence and intolerance, with a view to countering terrorist narratives and encouraging critical thinking in our societies so as to prevent radicalization, recruitment and the mobilization of resources, including through the improper use of information and communication technologies.

For all those reasons, we look forward to the contributions of the Office of Counter-Terrorism in bringing greater coherence and effectiveness to the counter-terrorism activities of the United Nations, including in relation to the assistance it can provide in addressing Member States' capacity-building needs at their request, while underscoring that such assistance must be tailored to the specific needs and realities of the States concerned and should take into account the importance of national ownership.

In conclusion, the 120 States members of the Non-Aligned Movement would like to express their full solidarity with those countries that have most recently suffered from acts of terrorism and reiterate the importance of concluding a comprehensive convention for combating international terrorism that would complement the existing legal instruments in this field. Let us work together decisively, hand in hand and in coordination, to eliminate this terrible scourge, including through the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Mr. Ababtain (Saudi Arabia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

While the international community is making tremendous strides in its ongoing battle, we believe that terrorism continues to undermine our shared vision of a peaceful and prosperous world. The sixth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy offers us the opportunity to renew our collective and unwavering resolve to combat that scourge. In that spirit, the OIC welcomes the adoption by consensus of resolution 72/284 as yet another step forward in promoting the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy at the national, regional and international levels. We thank the co-facilitators, Ambassador Bahous of Jordan and Ambassador Sauer of Finland, and their able teams for their tireless work in arriving at a consensus text.

Today's resolution captures our concerns about some emerging threats and suggests appropriate remedial measures. It underscores the need to address all local and external drivers of terrorism without taking a selective approach. The OIC reaffirms that we must make concerted and determined efforts to effectively address the root causes and drivers of terrorism and the conditions conducive to its spread, including preventing the unlawful use of force or aggression and ending foreign occupation, unilateral coercion and political, economic and social injustice.

The resolution underlines the need for enhanced synergy and effectiveness in various United Nations entities' work on counter-terrorism. In that context, the OIC stresses that we should enhance the transparency and coordination of the activities of United Nations counter-terrorism entities and that duplication should be avoided. While the OIC supports institutional coherence in United Nations counter-terrorism efforts, we also emphasize the importance of conforming to the mandates of the various United Nations organs and entities. The OIC recognizes the work of the Office of Counter-Terrorism and strongly encourages it to continue working with the same diligence and to keep Member States updated on its work. The Group also notes with appreciation the important work carried out by the Counter-Terrorism Centre and its role in building Member States' capacity to counter terrorism and in that regard calls on Member States to continue to support the Centre and to contribute to its growth into a centre of excellence.

The OIC member States encourage the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and its Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact to enhance their consultations with Member States when planning and preparing their activities. The OIC particularly stresses the need for more analytical information in the reports of the Secretary-General on the resources required for providing capacity-building support to Member States in compliance with the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We want to see concrete proposals on mobilizing resources for capacity-building projects aimed at countering terrorism.

The OIC recognizes the resolution's added emphasis on addressing particular aspects and dimensions of terrorist threats. They include the need for enhanced international cooperation on the issues of the recruitment, movement, prosecution and repatriation of foreign terrorist fighters; effective, multipronged action to combat terrorist financing and its nexus with transnational organized crimes; informed and pragmatic measures to counter terrorist propaganda and narratives; ways of addressing emerging threats through the Internet and new technologies, and specifically an international legal framework that deals with information and communications technologies; and heightened surveillance and measures to prevent terrorists' access to small arms and light weapons, as well as weapons of mass destruction. The OIC member States remain committed to working with the United Nations and other relevant partners to address those real and potential threats in a focused and results-oriented manner.

The OIC also recognizes the threats that terrorism poses to women, young people and children, and that resolution 72/284 highlights the importance of effectively addressing those threats. In that regard, we stress that sustained engagement is required to enable women and youth to act as potential agents of change and resilience in order to prevent radicalization within their respective communities. The OIC member States underscore that the rights of migrants and asylum-seekers must be protected and preserved, while ensuring that internationally agreed norms and standards in their favour are not abused by terrorists.

The OIC reiterates its principled position against acts of terrorism in all their forms and manifestations, regardless of where they are committed, by whom or for what reason. In that regard, we affirm our unequivocal rejection of all attempts to associate any particular country, race, religion, culture or nationality with terrorism. The group also underlines the importance of upholding international law, international humanitarian law, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism. In that context, we remain concerned about the growing intolerance and discrimination shown to Muslims around the world, which we believe represent an affront to their human rights and dignity. Here we should recall Human Rights Council resolution 16/18, entitled "Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief", as an important tool for countering radicalization, marginalization and alienation. We call for its effective implementation by the international community as a way to deprive terrorist groups of any justification for radicalization on the grounds of ethnic or religious stigmatization and discrimination. We underscore the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an effective mechanism for combating extremism and incitement to hatred based on religion.

The OIC member States affirm the importance that we attach to the sustained, effective and comprehensive implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the need to have a robust follow-up mechanism in place in order to ensure a balanced approach to its four pillars. We stress that the implementation of the Strategy lies first and foremost in the hands of Member States, while the General Assembly has a central role to play in following up its implementation.

In conclusion, the OIC reiterates that the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is a living document that should be examined and reviewed regularly. We will continue to remain involved in that endeavour as a matter of priority, including at the highest political level.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the MIKTA countries — Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia. MIKTA represents a diverse group of countries with different cultural, historical and religious backgrounds, located in different corners of the world. Yet our shared values and interests transcend our diversity and enable us to take similar approaches to the many challenges that the international community is facing today.

Of these challenges, terrorism, and the violent extremism that can lead to terrorism, presents a global threat from which no country or region is immune. As a result, MIKTA has identified counter-terrorism and security as one of its seven core areas of collaboration in order to contribute to greater global peace and stability. Preventing and combating terrorism is one of our priorities. Bearing that in mind in their most recent communiqué, adopted at their eleventh meeting in Istanbul last December, the MIKTA Foreign Ministers reiterated their strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and emphasized the importance of effective international cooperation to counter terrorism.

As a follow-up, under Indonesia's chairship, the MIKTA nations will hold an initiative on counter-terrorism cooperation, with a focus on prevention, to be held in Indonesia later this year. The MIKTA Foreign Ministers also reaffirmed the importance of taking a more comprehensive approach encompassing not only ongoing, essential, security-based counter-terrorism measures but also systematic preventive measures and respect for human rights. They also stressed that violent extremists come from every stratum of society, including many different ethnic, religious, ideological and non-religious groups. Our efforts must recognize that terrorism and violent extremism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

The continuing recent terrorist attacks across the world, including in some MIKTA countries, have shown the urgent need for increased and effective international cooperation and solidarity to address this threat. The MIKTA countries are convinced that only through concerted action at the global, regional and national levels and by fulfilling our obligations under international law can we succeed in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. Against that background, we strongly support the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its balanced implementation across all four of its pillars. We therefore welcome the Assembly's adoption by consensus of resolution 72/284, on the sixth review of the Strategy. We thank the facilitators, Ambassador Bahous of Jordan and Ambassador Sauer of Finland, and their teams for their able facilitation of the negotiations.

We welcome the fact that the Strategy has been updated to include references to new challenges that have arisen and ways to address them, such as halting the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, including those returning or relocating, particularly from conflict zones to their countries of origin or nationality or to third countries, and countering the financing of terrorism, terrorist narratives and the misuse of new information and communication technologies to spread them. We believe that it is important to continue our joint efforts to prevent and counter terrorism, including through the relevant national action plans.

Countering terrorism and preventing the violent extremism that can be conducive to it require a whole-of-society approach as well as a whole-of-Government approach. Adding further references to the fundamental role that civil society, young people and local actors play in the matter is therefore a positive step. We believe that human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are complementary and mutually reinforcing with effective counter-terrorism measures, and an essential part of any successful counter-terrorism effort.

The MIKTA countries believe that an effectively functioning United Nations system is an essential key to addressing terrorism and the violent extremism that can be conducive to it, as with other global challenges we face today. In that regard, following the adoption last June of resolution 71/291 to establish the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the MIKTA countries, which support the pivotal role of the United Nations in global counter-terrorism efforts, made a joint statement (see A/71/PV.87) in which we expressed our hope that the reform would enhance the strategic coordination and coherence of United Nations counter-terrorism activities, both within the United Nations system and with relevant external actors, in order to create synergies and avoid duplication. In that regard, we note with appreciation the signing of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact and look forward to its effective implementation. We want to highlight the importance of the timely, adequate and effective delivery and facilitation by the United Nations of counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to Member States at their request and would like to take this opportunity to express our support to the Office and to Under-Secretary-General Voronkov for his efforts in operationalizing it.

Lastly, we look forward to the first-ever United Nations high-level conference of heads of counter-terrorism agencies of Member States, to be convened by the Secretary-General on 28 and 29 June. We thank the Secretary-General for placing countering and preventing terrorism at the top of the United Nations agenda and hope that the conference can contribute to strengthening the United Nations in order to enable it to better address the global threat of terrorism.

I will now make some additional remarks in my capacity as the representative of Turkey.

At the outset, I would like to pay tribute to all victims of terrorism. As a country fighting three different terrorist groups at once — the Kurdistan Workers' Party/Democratic Union Party, Da'esh and the Fethullah Terrorist Organization — we know all too well the heavy toll that terrorism takes on societies. Terrorism remains one of the world's most acute threats to international peace and security and no country is immune to it. Nor can it be associated with any country, race, religion, culture or nationality.

Despite some positive developments, the global terrorist threat has not diminished since the last review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. As recent attacks have shown, terrorism continues to spread, geographically and ideologically, and terrorists manage to adapt to new conditions. Mindful of that situation, Turkey has continued to contribute to global counter-terrorism efforts since the last review by further enhancing border security, information-sharing and preventive measures. With the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006, Member States expressed their resolve to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. The Strategy reflects a unique consensus, based on its four pillars, and it is therefore crucial to maintain the consensus around that unique global instrument by updating it to face the evolving threats. Against that backdrop, we welcome the Assembly's adoption by consensus of resolution 72/284, on the sixth review of the Strategy, and I would like to express our appreciation to Finland and Jordan for successfully co-facilitating the negotiations on the draft.

Respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law is an essential part of a successful counter-terrorism effort. While rule-of-law-based security measures remain the fundamental pillar of counter-terrorism efforts, a broader approach is needed to make our societies more resilient to violent extremism, all forms and manifestations of which should be addressed with equal determination, while recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Preventive measures should also focus on combating intolerance, social exclusion and all forms of xenophobia. We should be vigilant against populist, anti-Islam and far-right rhetoric.

Mr. Brown (Liberia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The United Nations has a central role to play in combating this scourge by ensuring the balanced implementation of the Strategy and supporting the efforts of Member States at their request. Strengthening the role of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre in building the capacity of Member States is essential to achieving that objective. I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Secretary-General for his commitment to putting counter-terrorism efforts at the top of our agenda. We appreciate the initiative to develop the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact and hope that the new framework will contribute to achieving stronger coordination and coherence. We also reiterate our support to the Office of Counter-Terrorism and its Head, Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, for their ongoing efforts. We also welcome the initiative to hold the first-ever United Nations high-level conference of heads of counter-terrorism agencies of Member States. We look forward to the event, which will help to enhance the visibility of United Nations counter-terrorism efforts.

Despite the global impact of terrorism, our cooperation, information and intelligence-sharing are still insufficient. We cannot succeed in our counter-terrorism efforts unless we engage in genuine international cooperation. As the Secretary-General has emphasized, no cause or grievance justifies terrorism. There can be no good or bad terrorists. We should maintain a resolute and principled stance and avoid selective approaches. Turkey remains ready to engage in further discussions aimed at improving the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy review.

Mr. Tabajara de Oliveira (Brazil): I would like to begin by congratulating the facilitators, Ambassadors Bahous and Sauer, the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Finland, as well as their teams, for their tireless work during the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Just since 12 May, when the Secretary-General's report (A/72/840) was circulated and consultations started on the draft of resolution 72/284, terrorist attacks in various regions of the world have claimed more than 800 lives and wounded more than 1,000 people. The most recent attack occurred just yesterday in Meskel Square in Addis Ababa. It is a reminder of why we cannot afford to fail. Brazil would like to express its condolences to all affected by such attacks and reiterates that there can be no justification for terrorism.

Terrorism is an evolving threat. As a strong advocate of the centrality of the United Nations in our fight against terrorism, Brazil attaches great importance to maintaining an up-to-date Strategy that can address current challenges. We also deem it crucial to preserve its consensual basis, which reflects the galvanized voice of all States members of the Organization's most inclusive and democratic body. The creation of the Office of Counter-Terrorism has emerged as an example where the General Assembly has risen to the challenge of promoting coherence and consistency in the Organization's efforts. The signing of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact represents another positive step towards an all-of-United Nations approach. But the reform of the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture remains an unfinished task. We look forward to the report to be issued in May 2019, which should provide meaningful input for a discussion on the issue at the next Strategy review.

The absence of a universally agreed-on definition of terrorism is detrimental to our shared goal of eliminating it. We must overcome the stalemate preventing the adoption of a comprehensive convention against international terrorism. The convening of a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations could provide much of the political push needed to attain that goal. A comprehensive convention against international terrorism could help to harmonize the legal framework, facilitate mutual legal assistance and cooperation and create improved conditions for ensuring due process and compliance with human rights. It is also important to clarify the relationship among concepts such as terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism. They may be linked in certain contexts, but they are not intrinsically correlated. Conflating such notions could lead to justifying an overly broad application of counter-terrorism measures, including against acts that do not qualify as acts of terrorism. It is also important to stress that terrorism and transnational organized crime are not automatically or universally linked. Even in circumstances in which there is a relationship, various areas of responsibility are involved. While terrorism constitutes a threat to international peace and security, transnational organized crime remains an issue within the realm of public security.

Terrorism can be countered only through approaches that address its root causes, in particular those associated with protracted conflicts and social, political, economic and cultural exclusion. Terrorist groups have been attracting recruits by offering them a sense of purpose, belonging and identity that they probably failed to find elsewhere. Appropriate responses to the refugee and migrant crises decrease rather than increase the risks associated with terrorism.

Let us also not lose sight of the protracted conflicts that may fuel terrorist agendas. The failure to deal with the ongoing crises in the Middle East and strategies that privilege the use of force and unilateral interpretations in the Security Council are cases in point. Counter-terrorism efforts will be effective to the extent that they are consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, including the rules governing the use of force, as well as with international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. Some have argued that self-defence could be applied as a response to non-State actors, sometimes adding as a condition the criterion of a State's unwillingness or inability to act. Brazil does not agree with attempts to reinterpret the scope of self-defence.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Terrorism continues to wreak havoc, spreading destruction, fear and hate throughout the world. The growing number of victims on every continent is a constant reminder that the scourge concerns us all. Switzerland condemns in the strongest terms the horrendous and unacceptable acts of violence committed as a result of this murderous madness, and expresses its deepest sympathy to the victims of terrorism and their loved ones.

In the light of the current threat and given the fact that terrorists utterly reject our values, it is crucial that we continue our joint efforts against terrorism. If those efforts are to be effective and sustainable, they must be consistent with international law and the principles of the rule of law. Switzerland believes firmly that the United Nations has a vital role to play in combating terrorism and preventing violent extremism. We are fully committed to implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which remains our principal frame of reference and, as we all know, is based on four mutually reinforcing, interdependent pillars: prevention, law enforcement, capacity-building and respect for human rights.

Switzerland would like to thank the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General Voronkov of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism for the latest report (A/72/840) on the activities undertaken by the United Nations system to implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and for organizing the sixth Strategy review and the forthcoming high-level conference for heads of counter-terrorism agencies of Member States. The conference will enable us to discuss specific aspects of the Strategy in greater depth. Switzerland would also like to thank the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Finland for their leadership and efforts, which have enabled us to adopt the sixth review by consensus as resolution 72/284.

Since the Strategy's adoption in 2006, Switzerland has worked to ensure its full and balanced implementation, nationally and internationally. To cite some examples of our achievements since 2016, in order to strengthen the first pillar, Switzerland, together with the United Nations, organized the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism in April 2016, which helped to promote and implement the Strategy on the basis of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), which prompted Switzerland, and several other countries, to adopt a national action plan for the prevention of violent extremism.

In order to build Switzerland's own capacity, as envisaged in the Strategy's second pillar, we have initiated legislative processes to adapt our criminal legislation and designed a number of administrative measures. Under the third pillar, Switzerland has undertaken numerous capacity-building projects with our United Nations partners and others, including the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund. Switzerland has also committed to meeting State obligations under the fourth pillar. Within the framework of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, whose Criminal Justice and Rule of Law Working Group we co-chair with Nigeria, Switzerland has continued to emphasize the implementation of the Neuchâtel Memorandum on Good Practices for Juvenile Justice in a Counterterrorism Context, which clarifies obligations relating to children's rights in the context of the fight against terrorism.

In the light of the extensive discussions on the review of the Strategy over the past few weeks, we would like to note the following points. First, we welcome the fact that we have been able to maintain our previous achievements with regard to preventing violent extremism, respecting human rights and the rule of law and safeguarding the humanitarian space. Secondly, Switzerland welcomes the introduction in the review of two paragraphs aimed at strengthening respect for international humanitarian law by recalling the obligation of parties to conflict to protect the civilian population.

Thirdly, we regret that the fourth pillar continues to be the weakest and worst-funded in the United Nations architecture, despite the fact that an approach based on the international legal framework, including with regard to gender aspects, is essential if we genuinely want to succeed in eradicating terrorism over the long term. My country is honoured to contribute to the fourth pillar by supporting the launch of a guide for Member States with details on how to comply with United Nations resolutions and meet their human rights obligations. The guide, which was prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, will be presented to Member States on Thursday. Fourthly, Switzerland welcomes the request to the Secretary-General to present a new report in May 2019 that will assess the Strategy's impact and enable us to take stock of the reform process initiated by the Secretary-General through the establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism.

I would like to say a few words about the links between counter-terrorism efforts and other United Nations areas of action. On 23 February, the Secretary-General signed the new United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact as an agreed framework between the Secretary-General, the Heads of the United Nations entities, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization for strengthening coordination, consistency and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and mobilizing shared resources. That commitment meets the need for a holistic approach that emphasizes prevention and addresses the conditions that lead to the spread of conflict by integrating peace, sustainable development and human rights. In order to ensure that the United Nations can continue to respond effectively to the multiple challenges facing the world, it is vital to maintain a balanced approach so that all entities can remain faithful to their mandates, while contributing to broader counter-terrorism efforts.

My country will continue to work with determination to prevent and combat terrorism while respecting human rights and international humanitarian law. Through our efforts we can help to prevent conflicts and build lasting peace.

Mr. Bell (Canada): Today, for the sixth time, we are reviewing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy together and taking stock of the developments that have occurred in the two years since the last review. Some progress has been made, but there have also been setbacks. Terrorism in its evolving forms remains a constant threat for us all, despite our collective efforts and best attempts at coordination and cooperation. What do we therefore need to do better?

For Canada, effectively addressing terrorism and violent extremism means working with communities and civil society to build resilient societies. The complex issue underlying the terrorist threat requires a whole-of-society approach. There is no long-term military solution to the threat. The role of civilian actors and civil society is essential for such efforts and cannot be overstated, which is why we are deeply disappointed with the exclusion of civil society from the full inaugural high-level conference to be held later this week.

At the foundation of those efforts is ensuring inclusive and accountable governance that respects diversity and the human rights of all members of society. Prevention is enhanced when we build on resilient societies in which every member feels invested in his or her society. It is Canada's conviction and our experience that terrorism and violent extremism are not particular to any specific religion, nationality, culture or ethnic group. Terrorism can assume any form and demands that we set aside our biases for evidence-based analysis.

(*spoke in French*)

As the terrorist threat evolves, new challenges require new solutions. When we consider the issue of the return of foreign terrorist fighters and their families, or their resettlement in a third country, it is clear that we cannot solve the problem by arrests alone. By themselves, police actions and those of the criminal justice system are inadequate in addressing the phenomenon, and a solution will require the efforts of more than one generation. How should we reintegrate them into society? How can we prevent them from resorting to violent extremism? How should we deal with children who have undergone profound and violent traumatic experiences and have been indoctrinated into violent ideologies since a tender age? This question has forced us to better understand the impact of gender and gender-based roles and consider age and gender during prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration. If we dig deeper, we cannot but see gender as a factor used by terrorist groups, while exploiting and manipulating gender dynamics in a sophisticated manner so as to gain support and recruit followers. It is not a matter of checking off a box, or a side or soft issue. It is a fundamental factor enabling us to understand the threat and develop effective ways to act.

Canada continues to view the United Nations as an important partner in responding to that threat. We are pleased to work with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to confront a wide range of issues, such as foreign terrorist fighters, border security and domestic radicalization taking place within prisons. We also fund projects led by the Office of Counter-Terrorism, which focus on the prevention of violent extremism through engagement with young people and law-enforcement training personnel in issues related to human rights, the rule of law and the prevention of terrorism. We continue to work together in adapting our methods to confront new challenges generated by the evolving nature of terrorism. I believe, nevertheless, that we are all aware that many disagreements remain with regard to the best approach to be used within the United Nations. Such differences were made apparent over the past several weeks and months.

(*spoke in English*)

With that in mind, I would like to extend my most sincere thanks to the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Finland and their teams for their tireless efforts and resolve in seeking a consensus document, when, at times, it looked as thought it might not be possible. We would like to express our satisfaction at the adoption by consensus earlier this morning of resolution 72/284. A consensus resolution, however, is by its very nature the result of finely balanced negotiations. For Canada, the most notable aspects of the resolution are not necessarily what we can find in it, but rather what was left out. We would have liked to see stronger language on gender, human rights and civil society included in its text. We are particularly disappointed that the resolution does not tie a closer link to the women and peace and security agenda, nor does it recognize the importance of gender dimensions in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism. In addition, the resolution, like its previous iteration (resolution 70/291), in 2016, falls short of providing greater clarity and balance among the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Canada welcomed the creation of the Office of Counter-Terrorism almost a year ago and the appointment of its Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov. At the same time, we believe that the resolution could have been more ambitious in furthering the reform of the counter-terrorism architecture of the United Nations and in tying it more closely to the overall reform of the peace and security and development pillars of the United Nations as a whole. The creation of the Office was a first step in a process with many more steps.

We hope that the request for a report on the impact and progress in assessing the implementation of the Strategy by the United Nations will serve as an important opportunity to discuss these issues, including increasing the transparency and governance of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. We have also seen member States question the notion of violent extremism and try to impose a more vague wording for extremism in its place. Canada reiterates in the strongest terms possible that so-called extreme ideas can be a force for good and social progress and that the use of violence to promote extreme ideas is the real issue that needs to be tackled. In this regard, Canada is pleased that its efforts, together with those of many other member States, have prevented this departure from the agreed language.

Canada will continue to advocate internationally, in the United Nations and elsewhere, for the critical actions needed in this global effort. The United Nations must remain a key forum for unifying the international community and addressing this critical issue, despite our differences, and Canada will remain fully engaged in ensuring that resolution 72/284 is effectively implemented.

Ms. Bird (Australia): As others have done from this rostrum, I would like to begin by warmly thanking the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Jordan for successfully co-facilitating this year's review process. After four weeks of intense negotiations, we commend them and their teams on their patience and dedication to this difficult task.

Australia regards the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as a valuable element of the United Nations framework for combating terrorism. It continues to be a practical tool for Member States — a compass for our ongoing national, regional and international counter-terrorism efforts. Australia supports a balanced implementation of the Strategy across its four pillars. We note in particular the importance of prevention as part of a comprehensive counter-terrorism approach, as well as ensuring the protection of human rights and the rule of law.

A comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism is one that involves the whole of our society, which means drawing upon the skills, resources and expertise of all stakeholders, including leveraging the important roles of civil society in engaging local communities to halt recruitment and radicalization leading to terrorism, particularly among our young people. It means supporting victims of terrorism and addressing the disproportionate impact on women. We are pleased that this year's resolution 72/284 recognizes these complex dimensions. Australia continues to encourage member States to develop and maintain national plans of action for preventing violent extremism consistent with national circumstances and an assessment of the diverse drivers of violent extremism at local levels.

I would like to affirm Australia's ongoing support for the Strategy by drawing on three important themes in the resolution. First, we have seen the foreign-terrorist-fighter threat continue to evolve in the wake of the failed so-called caliphate of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Australian agencies are working closely with their international counterparts to detect and disrupt the outflow of foreign fighters from the Middle East through effective intelligence and law-enforcement measures. We know that the international aviation sector continues to be a target for terrorist groups. We support enhanced efforts in this area, including the resolution's call for the use of advanced passenger information, passenger name record and biometric data, where appropriate. Such measures should be implemented in accordance with domestic law and international obligations.

Secondly, we note the resolutions's call on the international community to ensure that terrorists do not find safe haven online, including through the exploitation of social media. Australia supports an open, free and secure Internet, but cyberspace is not an ungoverned space. We need to cooperate to ensure that terrorists cannot operate beyond the reach of the law online.

Thirdly, the resolution calls for ambitious activities from Member States to counter terrorist financing so as to prevent terrorists from abusing new technologies to fund and support terrorism. The text recognizes the importance of information-sharing within and among Governments with regard to financing matters. In tandem with this approach, countries must maintain strong and responsive national counter-terrorism financing regimes consistent with international standards.

In conclusion, Australia remains steadfast in its resolve to combat terrorism and prevent violent extremism through whole-of-society efforts at the local and national levels and through effective international collaboration. Enduring and genuine partnerships across all these levels are necessary if we are to be successful in the fight.

Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba firmly supports the collective efforts of the United Nations in its fight against terrorism. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is a milestone in confronting the scourge of terrorism internationally and respects the central role played by the General Assembly in this task. We would like to express our gratitude for the work done by the delegations of Finland and Jordan in coordinating the negotiations process and by those delegations that showed a political will to move forward in achieving our common goal.

We reiterate our steadfast will to combat terrorism, as well as our unequivocal rejection and condemnation of all terrorist acts, methods and practices in all their forms and manifestations by whomever, against whomever, wherever committed and whatever their motivations, including such acts in which States are directly or indirectly involved. The international community must not accept that, under the banner of the supposed fight against terrorism, certain States are allowed to commit acts of aggression, interfere in the internal affairs of other States or violate human rights and international humanitarian law, through acts such as torture, kidnapping, illegal detentions, disappearances and extrajudicial executions.

Cuba rejects double standards and unilateral actions that run contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and the principles and norms of international law. The violation of legal and ethical principles undermines the legitimacy of our struggle against international terrorism. Hatred, revenge and terror have no place in the fair and equitable international order for which we are striving.

Resolution 72/284, adopted today, incorporates significant advances in consolidating international cooperation in combating terrorism. Issues of particular importance were addressed, such as respect for the principle of sovereignty in combating that scourge; the primacy of State ownership in the implementation of the Strategy; the need to take measures that foster cooperation among States for the extradition of terrorists; countering the abusive exploitation of information and communication technologies for terrorist purposes; promoting the use of such technologies in accordance with international law; respect for privacy; and the rejection of the use of all practices that contravene international law under the pretext of combating terrorism.

Other matters will require further consideration in the near future, in particular so-called soft coups or soft coups d'état — covert operations that favour supposedly non-violent protests, and which, by virtue of their goals, concepts, financing and the practice of fomenting social terror, in reality constitute modern forms of State terrorism. In addition, certain States' destructive practice of financing and disseminating messages fostering hatred and intolerance of other peoples, cultures and political systems via the Internet, radio and television, in clear violation of the most basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, warrants our total condemnation.

Although it appreciates the progress made during the reviews of the Strategy within the Organization, Cuba stresses that much remains to be done in combating terrorism. The international community must take concrete steps towards the adoption of a general convention on terrorism that identifies the scourge in its entirety. It is unacceptable to associate any religion, race or ethnicity with terrorism. We must not allow politicization and double standards to impede overcoming the causes and conditions that can fuel it. Poverty, inequality, ill health, illiteracy, discrimination and hegemonic appetites for domination, among multiple other factors, are root causes underlying the proliferation of terrorism. It is also necessary to foster international understanding of ambiguous and politicized terms that do not enjoy international legal backing or a broad consensus so as to avoid double standards in their interpretation and use.

The issue of the protection of the victims of terrorism is a priority. States must comply with their obligation to try to extradite all terrorists without exception. For more than 40 years, the Cuban people demanded an end to the impunity enjoyed by the terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, who was responsible for the mid-flight explosion of a Cubana de Aviación aeroplane on 6 October 1976, which resulted in the deaths of the 73 people on board. Posada Carriles died this year, while at liberty, without ever having been brought to justice for his crimes.

Cuba supports multilateral efforts aimed at consolidating the role of the General Assembly in the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Member States can count on our full participation in the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by aligning the United Kingdom with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union, and I thank the Ambassadors of Finland and Jordan and their experts for their tireless efforts over the past month.

The United Kingdom is pleased that we, the States members of the General Assembly, have achieved international consensus while reviewing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It is important that, as the global terrorism threat evolves, the Strategy reflect the progress that we member States have made and that it continues to build upon this progress.

The journey to reach a consensus has been fraught with contentious debates. It has not been easy, but it is important that, in this forum, we all have an opportunity to share our views and perspectives and that we come together in the end to face a common and global threat. The United Kingdom is particularly pleased to see the reaffirmation of the importance of preventing violent extremism and of addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Prevention is a core component of our counter-terrorism approach, and we see an important role for the United Nations to play in furthering national and international efforts in this regard.

For the United Kingdom, preventing violent extremism is fundamentally about safeguarding people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism by reducing their intent to act. The United Kingdom champions a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach to prevention, which is reflected in the United Kingdom's newly revamped counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. We recognize that national and local forms of buy-in for programming and measures are critical ingredients for effectiveness and sustainability. Preventing violent extremism must be owned by a State's national or local authorities. It cannot be imposed from the outside. That would be wrong, and it would be ineffective. Let us therefore end our disagreement over labels and get on with action.

As the global threat posed by terrorism evolves and spans political borders, the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and those returning or relocating from conflict zones is a serious concern to many of us. We were pleased to see that international commitments to address this issue, including through tools such as advance passenger information and passenger name record, are reflected in resolution 72/284. We recognize that many States have called for technical assistance in meeting these obligations, and we support the efforts of the United Nations system and partners to provide the requested technical assistance. But we would also stress that Member States have the responsibility to meet all their obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2396 (2017) and 2309 (2016).

We welcome the strengthened cooperation between the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), as embodied by Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Coninsx, and we welcome their joint report (A/72/840, annex IV), which was shared with all Member States. The unique assessments and analyses provided by CTED provide an important basis for the capacity-building support provided by the Global Compact entities. These recommendations reflect the priorities and approval of Member States and the support of the Council through the Counter-Terrorism Committee. The United Kingdom is therefore keen that the General Assembly bodies work closely with those of the Security Council to ensure that the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture remains fit for purpose and positioned to respond in a rapidly evolving threat landscape.

Conversations among Member States will and rightfully should continue in the months to come to build on what we have achieved during the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy review and discuss frankly and openly those topics on which we may disagree. The United Kingdom wants to move forward. As we look ahead to the high-level conference on counter-terrorism to be held later this week, we hope that it will provide an opportunity for constructive exchange and insight. The United Kingdom hopes that, through the full contribution and involvement of both Government and civil-society organizations, we the international community can build on the consensus achieved on Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy review so as to make progress as a unified voice in our fight against global terrorism, because that fight is too important for us to be divided. That is the goal of the terrorists, so let us stand together.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico wishes to acknowledge the work of the delegations of Jordan and Finland in facilitating the consultation process leading to the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Mexico believes that this process serves to advance an open and constructive dialogue that enables formulating a more effective and comprehensive response to the phenomenon of international terrorism.

Over the past two years, since the previous review of the Strategy, terrorism and violent extremism leading to terrorism have evolved significantly and become an increasingly complex threat to international peace and security. The increased use of the Internet as a means to spread extremist and violent messages originating from terrorist organizations, numerous acts of low-budget terrorism directed against soft targets and the rise in xenophobic and racist narratives seeking to equate groups, religions and regions with international terrorism all underscore the importance of redoubling and coordinating our national, regional and multilateral efforts. In this context, Mexico welcomed the establishment, in June 2017, of the post of the Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, and we reiterate our support for the work conducted by the Office during the past year to improve the effectiveness and coordination of the United Nations in its efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and violent extremism leading to terrorism.

Despite joint efforts in recent years, international terrorism continues to affect thousands of innocent people without distinction as to their country or region of origin, age, gender, religion or politics. Mexico reiterates its support for and solidarity with the victims of terrorism. For this reason, we regret the absence of language in resolution 72/284 — the draft of which was presented within the framework of the sixth review — relating to the important role that victims, especially women and girls, can play in combating and preventing terrorism and in countering extremist narratives leading to terrorism. For Mexico, not only is it a priority to work at all levels to ensure that victims of terrorism have access to the justice system, but it is also extremely important to help in their recovery consequent to such events and in empowering them to join multilateral efforts aimed at preventing and combating international terrorism.

While developing effective and comprehensive responses to the threat is urgent in the short and medium term, we must also ensure the creation of sustainable strategies for the long term that not only respond to terrorism and mitigate its impact on civilian populations, but also address the underlying causes of social, political and economic grievances that make the extremist and violent message of those organizations attractive to the most vulnerable populations.

Hate speech has no place in any circumstance. It is irresponsible for Government actors, rather than to encourage social inclusion, to fuel various forms of extremism with racist and xenophobic language that damage our communities and prospects for a peaceful and harmonious life to which our citizens aspire.

Prevention means not fuelling hate. Mexico calls on all member States to take advantage of this review process to ensure that multilateral efforts to prevent terrorism always respect human rights and comply, without exception, with the international legal framework, including the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and the law of refugees. Today more than ever, the international community must rise to the challenges posed by terrorist threats and demonstrate that multilateralism, based on cooperation and collaboration among countries, mutually strengthened by their diversity, continues to be valid and has a real impact on the life and security of our people.

Ms. Werdaningtyas (Indonesia): I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/72/840). I would also thank the Permanent Representatives of Finland and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for facilitating the discussion on the outcome of the sixth review of the Strategy.

Despite the progress that has been made since we adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006, we are facing an evolving threat. Terrorists continue to adapt their methods, organization, networks and manifestations. In this regard, the sixth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy will provide us with an opportunity to strengthen our common efforts. The report of the Secretary-General clearly indicates that the threat of terrorism persists and that the United Nations must continue to play its strategic global role. Along these lines, I would like to emphasize several pertinent points from the Secretary-General's report.

First, with respect to the new United Nations counter-terrorism architecture, including the creation of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Indonesia welcomes the new arrangement, which aims to create synergies in and streamline the work and responsibilities of 38 United Nations entities in the areas of analysis and assessment, capacity-building, coordination and coherence. From Indonesia's perspective, the new structure will also ease collaboration with international and regional organizations beyond the United Nations system itself, as well as with other relevant forums and initiatives.

Secondly, we acknowledge that there are still different levels of capacities of States in implementing the Global Strategy. The United Nations is therefore expected to continue assisting Member States in strengthening their ability to combat terrorism by providing them with capacity-building assistance. We commit to supporting these efforts by sharing valuable experience and expertise. We also encourage further work to be focused on action-based activities, with a view to avoiding duplication and producing a significant impact on the ground.

I would like to share with the Assembly a recent update on our domestic situation, as well as relevant efforts in addressing the threat of terrorism. Recently, Indonesia experienced a horrific terrorist attack in Surabaya involving foreign-terrorist-fighter returnees. This occurrence showed that foreign terrorist fighters had linked up with local militant groups and effectively brought terrorists to our region. In response, Indonesia continued to emphasize the importance of the rule of law and the capacity of States to implement their laws, in line with the principle of national ownership. Accordingly, on 25 May, Indonesia amended its counter-terrorism law. The amended law broadened the authority of the State to deal with current manifestations of terrorism, including by criminalizing foreign-terrorist-fighter offences, if necessary, including returnees and relocators.

The current counter-terrorism law ensures that deradicalization and counter-radicalization programmes are part of our comprehensive approach to fighting terrorism. The deradicalization programme targets radicals in detention or a prison environment and aims to prepare them for reintegration into society, while the counter-radicalization programme is intended to protect society from the spread of radical and extremist narratives that lead to terrorism, especially by strengthening its resilience.

To support the implementation of rules and regulations, our Government is preparing a national action plan on countering violent extremism that will incorporate in part the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Our plan of action will focus on prevention, law enforcement, deradicalization and counter-radicalization, as well as partnership and international cooperation. The plan of action is set to be ready this year.

Preventing and suppressing terrorist financing is also a critical part of combating terrorism. To this end, Indonesia has enacted a law that lays the foundation for criminalizing terrorist financing and freezing the assets of terrorists and terrorist organizations.

Indonesia has also taken several innovative measures to tackle the threat of terrorism at the national level. To disrupt the cycle of radicalism, especially within terrorist families, several individuals formerly convicted of terrorism crimes established a foundation in East Java and an Islamic boarding school in North Sumatra. The foundation and boarding school have the following aims: first, recruiting and embracing former terrorist convicts; secondly, turning them into agents for combating and preventing radicalism and extremism in multi-generational families of terrorists; and thirdly, and most importantly, stopping the cycle of the intergenerational propagation of terrorists by targeting our young people.

To expedite the healing process and mutual forgiveness between ex-terrorist convicts and their victims, on 26 February the Government facilitated a reconciliation meeting to bridge peace and harmony between the two groups. The event was attended by 124 convicted former terrorists and 51 victims.

With regard to international cooperation, Indonesia welcomes the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism's initiative to organize a consultative meeting in South-East Asia on the human-rights-based treatment of children accompanying foreign terrorist fighters, to be held in Jakarta on 30 and 31 July.

In conclusion, since 2006, the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy has provided us with a comprehensive and internationally accepted strategy for combating terrorism. Considering the rapid changes in the development of terrorism itself, it is important to always keep the Strategy updated in order for all nations to be able to successfully deal with the threat together.

Mr. Lal (India): We thank the delegations of Jordan and Finland for co-facilitating the review process that led to the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 72/284, on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, by consensus. While the adoption of the resolution is by consensus, all of us are conscious that the text is primarily only a technical update on the previous Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy resolution adopted two years ago (resolution 70/291), marking the end of the first decade of the formulation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy at the United Nations. While any multilateral resolution has to strike a balance and reach a compromise, we are disappointed that the resolution does not reflect substantive modifications from its previous version. We say that since in the intervening period of two years terrorist networks have continued to terrorize peoples across different parts of the world, expanding their reach, propagating their ideologies of hate, recruiting across borders, raising funds and improving their use of modern technologies.

While most of the membership represented here has experienced terror attacks, we at the United Nations continue to struggle to advance meaningful multilateral cooperation on countering terrorism, often owing to narrow political considerations. It is disappointing to see the lack of meaningful progress even in the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy resolution language, which continues to reflect the inability of Member States to act collectively to tackle threats from non-State actors. That clearly does not augur well for our collective security.

The establishment of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism last year has been a positive development that, we hope, will contribute to the consolidation of efforts by the United Nations system in that context. We also welcome the hosting by the Office of Counter-Terrorism of the first-ever summit of heads of counter-terrorism agencies, which is scheduled for later this week. As part of India's continuing commitment to strengthen multilateral efforts to counter terrorism and support the work of the newly established Office of Counter-Terrorism, our Government has announced a voluntary contribution of $550,000 to the Office.

On the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy itself, we had hoped for a more honest appraisal of the functioning of the counter-terrorism architecture of the United Nations, including the work on that universal challenge in the Security Council. We had also hoped that member States could agree on focusing on the need to collectively discern the emerging threats and challenges posed by terrorist networks in terms of their use of modern technologies, recruitment strategies and striking targets across countries.

The message is clear. We remain far from being able to develop a common understanding and resolve to tackle that global threat with the seriousness and unity of purpose that it requires. We can allow that only at our own peril. The threat from terrorist networks is real and growing. A far more determined and non-partisan approach will be necessary for that multilateral process to be meaningful.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank the President for having convened this General Assembly meeting on the biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We also sincerely thank Ambassador Sauer of Finland and Ambassador Bahous of Jordan and their teams for co-facilitating this difficult but important negotiation. The Strategy was adopted by consensus 12 years ago and was a major step forward in international peace and security. We came together to coordinate a unified global framework to address the evolving threat of terrorism.

Looking back, we have strengthened our efforts after each and every review, whether it is through the endorsement of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism or by grounding our counter-terrorism and counter-violent-extremism work in human rights and fundamental freedoms. The 2016 review of the Strategy was a high-water mark, and we are pleased to see that despite the determined efforts of a small group of Member States to walk back important progress, key elements from 2016 endured, especially on the prevention of violent extremism. Prevention is integral to a comprehensive approach to tackling the underlying causes of violent extremism. That is why we welcome the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

It is critical that Member States develop tailored national action plans that take a whole-of-society approach to fortify the social compact and address the local drivers of violent extremism. We may be defeating the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida on the battlefield, but terrorist organizations are still able to radicalize and recruit people to commit acts of violence around the world. The goal of our efforts is not simply to react to those attacks, but also to prevent violent extremism by working with communities to stop radicalization in the first place. That requires Governments to partner with local actors, especially civil society, and go well beyond law enforcement.

Grass-roots organizations understand the challenges and nuances on the ground and often have more access to local communities. Family members, teachers, community organizers and religious authorities all can serve as early-warning mechanisms, as they are often in a position to spot initial signs of violent extremism before Government officials can. To win that fight, we must work with all of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, think tanks, educators and religious and cultural leaders to build resilience in our societies.

We call upon the United Nations and all Member States to strengthen their counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism work by increasing their engagement with local communities, especially women and youth, who are too often on the sidelines. We wish that resolution 72/284 could have better reflected the important role that civil society plays in effective counter-terrorism strategies.

Counter-terrorism efforts must not be abused for other political ends. We condemn the misuse of counter-terrorism laws by some Member States to criminalize ideas and punish so-called extremists who have not resorted to any form of violence. We must stay focused on real threats to international peace and security. Counter-terrorism should not be an excuse to undermine respect for human rights.

We also reiterate that successful counter-terrorism and prevention-of-violent-extremism efforts must respect human rights and be rooted in the rule of law. We regret that some Member States have demanded that donors step up to increase counter-terrorism capacity-building while using State sovereignty to shield themselves from accountability. When it comes to donor funding, the United States will not subsidize political crackdowns in the name of counter-terrorism. Again, the United States will focus on supporting counter-terrorism measures that we know yield results.

We are pleased that this year's resolution strengthens the global call to counter the flow of foreign terrorist fighters addressed in the Security Council's unanimously adopted resolution 2396 (2017). We must strengthen border security and law-enforcement efforts against foreign terrorist fighters through the increased collection, analysis and sharing of traveller data such as advanced passenger information, passenger name record and biometrics. We must develop and implement gender- and age-sensitive prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies. For the first time in the General Assembly, we condemned the use of civilians to shield military objectives from attack. Terrorists, with their disregard for the welfare of civilians, are among the worst abusers, as we have seen with Hamas, among many examples. We applaud our consensus on this important issue: that civilians, including children, should not be used to shield terrorists.

Finally, despite those achievements this year, we remain deeply concerned about the references to a so-called principle to extradite or prosecute, which is a misstatement of international law. While extradition and prosecution are vital elements of law enforcement's response to terrorism, the obligation to extradite or prosecute arises under specific multilateral treaties. It is not a free-standing principle of law. Attempting to advance incorrect and ambiguous legal provisions harms the legal cooperation it purports to advance. We also reject the generic call in paragraph 79 on Member States to ensure that counter-terrorism legislation does not impede humanitarian aid, even if terrorists benefit from such activities. Member States are obligated to prohibit their nationals, or those within their territories, from providing assets to terror organizations or individual terrorists for any purpose.

The 2018 Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is stronger than the last one, and that is why we joined consensus today on all but one paragraph, despite our concerns. We are committed to working harder to protect our future generations from terrorism and violent extremism, and overall the resolution is a step in the right direction.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/72/840), as well as the President for having convened this sixth review. I would also like to commend the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Finland, Ambassadors Sima Sami Bahous and Kai Sauer, and their respective teams of experts for facilitating the adoption of resolution 72/284.

The Republic of Argentina has twice been a victim of international terrorism: the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires was attacked in 1992 and the headquarters of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association in 1994. For that reason, our country was one of the first to draw attention to the need for the establishment by the international community of clear definitions in order to establish the basis for a policy of cooperation and coordination in the fight against terrorism.

Much progress has been made since the last Strategy review. Argentina welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to assist Member States in the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We also welcome the appointment of Mr. Vladimir Voronkov as Under-Secretary-General in charge of that Office.

In that regard, we wish to express the support of the Republic of Argentina for the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, which represents an important step towards establishing a set of guidelines to improve coordination and cohesion within the United Nations system, together with INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization. We hope that through the consistent application of those guidelines, Member States will be able to benefit directly from the specific knowledge and skills that the international community has accumulated over decades in the fight against the scourge of terrorism.

Since the last review of the Strategy, in 2016, Argentina has sought to implement the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in a balanced manner. Within the framework of Pillar I of the Global Strategy, the Argentine Republic has strengthened its legislation on rights and guarantees aimed at protecting the victims of all crimes, including terrorism, in order to ensure that they receive advice, assistance, legal representation, protection and access to justice.

Within the framework of Pillar II of the Global Strategy, Argentina has strengthened its national capacities to prevent and combat terrorism. To that end, more than 100 million migratory movements at our land and river borders, seaports and international airports are checked annually against INTERPOL's database through coordinated efforts by federal authorities and agencies to prevent the cross-border movement of terrorists, weapons and explosives.

Under the leadership of Argentina's Ministry of Justice, we have begun a review process of Argentine penal law with the aim of ensuring that national punitive regulations are in line with our international commitments. The preliminary draft reform of the penal code, which is expected to be discussed soon in our National Congress, includes improved wording on the criminal definition of the crime of terrorism and its financing, and includes a new criminal definition of the crime of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In the same vein, our country is carrying out its first national risk assessment on terrorism financing and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, within the framework of the Financial Action Task Force recommendations. This is a national effort that includes private-sector actors with direct and indirect competence in the prevention of and fight against financial crime. It should also be noted that the Ministry of Justice of Argentina is making progress on training plans for judges, prosecutors and public-administration officials in the area of property investigations in the context of money laundering, terrorism financing and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to Pillar III, the visit by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate authorities to Argentina last year was extremely positive, and we hope to see reflected in its report on the visit the progress made by Argentina in the implementation of relevant resolutions on the subject.

With respect to the framework of Pillar IV, Argentina reiterates its unequivocal position of unconditional respect for international law, international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law in the fight against the scourge of terrorism, a view it has expressed in all international forums and bilateral meetings with Member States.

I wish to express my country's firm commitment to resolution 72/284, which we have just adopted, given that it reflects both the values and principles of the United Nations, which underpin Argentina's position in the fight against terrorism. It also includes the new United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, which have been established since the most recent review was carried out, in June 2016, a review that my delegation had the honour to co-facilitate with the Permanent Mission of Iceland.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that we welcome the spirit of the resolution and the efforts that it seeks to spur in Member States, in particular by strengthening action within the framework of multilateral bodies, especially on the part of the United Nations, the Secretary-General, the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the Security Council and the Counter-Terrorism Committee and its Executive Directorate, as well as specialized organizations and regional and subregional organizations. Argentina believes that those are the areas that are most appropriate for coordinating the cooperation among States that is necessary for the prevention and eradication of terrorism.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation this morning.

We join others in congratulating the Ambassadors of Finland and Jordan, and their respective delegations, for their diligent work in guiding the adoption by consensus of resolution 72/284, on the sixth review of the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Bangladesh believes that the comprehensive and balanced implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy through context-specific responses at the national and regional levels can make a real difference in defeating this global scourge and its growing nexus with organized crime. We feel encouraged by the unity of purpose demonstrated once again by Member States in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We draw assurance from the renewed commitment not to associate terrorism with any particular nationality, ethnic group or religion. We take note of Member States' sensitization to the emerging threats posed by terrorist groups, often taking advantage of new technologies.

The resolution adopted today has made some progress on addressing the issue of foreign terrorist fighters, emphasizing the need to enhance international cooperation for border and aviation security. Our delegation would have welcomed further substantive progress on issues concerning terrorist activities in cyberspace, the gender dimension of terrorism and combating the financing of terrorism.

We have been particularly concerned over the difference of views we witnessed this time on the issue of preventing violent extremism. Our delegation strongly feels that there should not be any scope for reinterpreting the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, of which we had collectively taken note of during the fifth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The Plan of Action underscores the primacy of national strategies developed and implemented through a whole-of-society approach, and that should remain the guiding principle going forward.

We would consider it counter-productive to question or redefine the notion of violent extremism itself when a number of Member States, including ours, have acknowledged the threats it poses as conducive to terrorism. The Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism can be deemed to be a useful instrument to further facilitate the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, in particular in addressing the underlying drivers and factors of terrorism at the community level.

The sixth review exercise has made it evident that despite the shared commitment of Member States to combat terrorism, there are still wide divergences about effective ways and means of doing so in a concerted manner. The issues at stake are more or less familiar to all delegations and perhaps cannot be addressed through biannual review exercises alone. Our delegation would encourage a group of interested Member States, together with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, to facilitate a series of informal conversations in the interim to help advance informed and frank deliberations on some of those critical issues in an inclusive manner. The forthcoming United Nations Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States could be a good starting point for initiating such a dialogue.

The issue of upholding the relevant provisions of international humanitarian and human rights law in combating terrorism need not be overemphasized. We in Bangladesh are struggling with the Rohingya humanitarian crisis, which has been the egregious and disproportionate fallout from a so-called counter-terrorism drive that amounted to nothing short of ethnic cleansing by the Myanmar authorities. It is critical that double standards in combating terrorism be discarded so that no Member State can forgo its primary responsibility to protect the civilian population on its territory in the name of counter-terrorism operations. We urge Myanmar and Member States with influence on it not to use the counter-terrorism issue as a pretext to refuse or hinder the return and rehabilitation of the Rohingya who are languishing along the border between our two countries, as well as the nearly 1 million of them now camped in Bangladesh. For our part, Bangladesh remains committed to denying sanctuary to any terrorist elements from our neighbouring countries, in adherence to our Government's vision for regional security.

Today we woke up to yet another piece of sad news, about the death of one of our military observers deployed in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, in Juba, reportedly as a result of an ambush by a militia group. We would stress the paramount importance of strategic communication with all parties to conflict about the non-combative engagement of United Nations peacekeeping operations in counter-terrorism efforts, so that our peacekeepers are not targeted indiscriminately in attacks by militia and terrorist groups.

We would conclude by once again putting on record our appreciation for the sound working relations our delegation has developed with the newly formed Office of Counter-Terrorism. We also recognize the critical technical assistance and capacity-building support that we continue to receive from the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre and other United Nations entities, primarily in areas aligned with our national priorities. Bangladesh will continue to encourage and support all constructive initiatives aimed at enhancing coherence and coordination across the counter-terrorism efforts of the United Nations.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to thank Ambassador Bahous of Jordan and Ambassador Sauer of Finland, as well as their teams, for their hard work during the sixth review process of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

My delegation thanks the representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the representative of Venezuela for their statements on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively.

The adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006 constituted a major stride in our counter-terrorism efforts. After many years, the Strategy has become a reference point for cooperation and coordination among the United Nations and its Member States in countering terrorism. It should be comprehensively and consistently implemented, ensuring a balance among its four pillars.

The sixth review, held 12 years after the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, is the first review to be conducted following the establishment of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/291, adopted by consensus. My delegation joined the consensus at that time because we believed in the new role of the Office, which represents an important step in our collective efforts to successfully implement the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and enhance the role of the United Nations in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

In spite of the military advances made by various Iraqi national forces against the terrorist organization Da'esh and the liberation of all Iraqi territories last year — those occupied by Da'esh since 2014 — that organization continues to commit the most horrendous acts of violence and murder throughout the world in the name of Islam, although Islam has nothing to do with it. It poses a threat to international peace and security, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/840), which contains important information on the implementation of the Strategy, the contributions made by Member States to such implementation and the need to address existing threats.

The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate has evaluated the priority issues facing my country, Iraq, at the legal, institutional and operational levels in the fight against terrorism and has compiled a list of the 16 issues of the highest priority to the Iraqi Government. In this regard, we express our deep gratitude to Mr. Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, and Ms. Michèle Coninsx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, for their joint visit to Iraq early last March. That visit gave rise to several important projects aimed at addressing four priority issues as a first step, in particular in the areas of capacity-building to counter the financing of terrorism; providing young people with employment opportunities and upgrading their skills and capacities to counter violent extremism; improving national capacities to prevent and address biological and chemical attacks in Iraq; and preventing violent extremism through strategic communications.

Once again, we stress the importance of enhancing international cooperation. We urge Member States to uphold their commitments pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions on countering terrorism, particularly resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015), with regard to preventing the financing of Da'esh terrorist groups and cross-border trafficking in oil, arms and Iraqi and Syrian monuments by these groups.

My delegation joined the consensus on resolution 72/284, pertaining to the sixth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, with a view to standing together in combating terrorism pursuant to its important provisions, particularly those related to taking measures against foreign terrorist fighters, preventing access to illegal arms and the financing of terrorism, addressing terrorist discourse, enhancing the role of young people, women and civil society, focusing on capacity-building, and the provision of assistance to Member States upon their request by the United Nations system, especially the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism.

In conclusion, my country's delegation welcomes the United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, to be held on 28 and 29 June. We consider the conference and its side events to be an important opportunity and a prelude to further developments with respect to the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We should work from now with the aim of reaching an agreement during the consideration of a draft resolution on the seventh review of the Strategy in 2020.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the President for convening today's important plenary meeting on the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. My appreciation also goes to Finland and Jordan for their tremendous efforts in facilitating the review discussion.

The threat of terrorism has been evolving and spreading globally. The adoption by consensus today of resolution 72/284, on the sixth review of the Strategy, reaffirms the commitment of all Member States to combating terrorism and preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism. We discussed through the review the threat of foreign terrorist fighters, including returning and relocating fighters. To detect such fighters and uncover their networks, it is vitally important to take collective measures to use advance passenger information, passenger name record and biometric data, as well as to connect INTERPOL databases to law-enforcement, border security and customs agencies.

Complementing Security Council resolution 2396 (2017), resolution 72/284 reaffirms the importance of advance passenger information, passenger name record and biometric data and INTERPOL databases connected to border checkpoints. We believe that this is one of the most significant added-value elements of the resolution, and we must therefore redouble our efforts to implement it. Japan underscored the importance of these measures through the review discussion and provides technical assistance and capacity-building to Member States that need it.

Let me also stress the importance of the role of civil society, community leaders, women and youth in tackling terrorism and preventing violent extremism. For example, the role of women includes shaping communities and family values, identifying the first signs of radicalization and intervening at an early stage, and using various forms of media to promote counter-narratives.

I should like to introduce one of the successful projects that Japan has contributed to women's empowerment through UN-Women. This project was aimed identifying former hostages of Boko Haram and empowering those women by providing training in small-business management skills and economic kits that enable the women to start small businesses. In fact, our projects have provided several examples of how protecting and empowering women contributes to counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism. In that regard, we should have wanted to see stronger language in resolution 72/284 to recognize the role of these actors.

The adoption of the sixth review resolution today by consensus was a landmark event for renewing our commitment to counter-terrorism. But this is not the end. Now we must implement what we have adopted, and I urge all member States to take concrete actions on the basis of the Strategy and resolution 72/284.

Mr. Edrees (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to thank Ambassador Bahous, Permanent Representative of Jordan, and Ambassador Sauer, Permanent Representative of Finland, for their efforts to facilitate the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Egypt, along with other like-minded countries, proposed solutions and compromises in order to arrive at a consensus on the term "violent extremism conducive to terrorism". This term remains ambiguous, and there is confusion between the terms "terrorism" and "violent extremism conducive to terrorism", given that there is no international definition of the latter. Regarding terrorism, there is an international consensus on the meaning of the crime of terrorism, although there is no United Nations definition of terrorism, for known political reasons.

Egypt and other like-minded countries have made suggestions on this topic and underscored the non-existence of a link between violent extremism conducive to terrorism and any religion, nationality, region, culture or social and economic level, especially given that some members have a tendency to characterize criminal acts as terrorism when their perpetrators are groups such as Da'esh or Al-Qaida, which claim to represent Islam, but to characterize those same criminal acts as violent extremism when perpetrated by other religious groups or by groups with ties to the extreme right. Hence, the same criminal acts are characterized differently, and terrorism and Islam are incorrectly linked.

Egypt and like-minded countries have a sincere desire to reach a real consensus rather than an informal one on the term "violent extremism conducive to terrorism". This consensus would help the General Assembly to understand the term violent extremism conducive to terrorism. Had we arrived at a consensus, we would have benefited the common interest and the United Nations, especially that avoiding extremism conducive to terrorism and avoiding terrorism are top priorities for us because we are a country that faces terrorism on the ground every day. However, some States insist on this non-constructive ambiguity regarding the term "violent extremism conducive to terrorism".

Given that we wished to not break the consensus on resolution 72/284, on the sixth review of the United National Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, we agreed to retain the same paragraphs contained in the fifth review resolution (resolution 71/291) regarding violent extremism conducive to terrorism, without adding any new paragraphs in this regard. Nevertheless, new positive and important paragraphs were added to the resolution regarding foreign terrorist fighters and the need to counter the terrorist discourse, implement Security Council resolution 2354 (2017) and the international comprehensive framework to combat terrorist discourse, deny terrorists a safe haven on the Internet, extradite criminals with ties to terrorism, and prevent the financing of terrorism.

We have also preserved several other important paragraphs that others had sought to delete or amend in way that would have rendered them meaningless, including paragraphs on the established principle of extradition and prosecution; the need to put an end to foreign occupation; building the capacities of States and providing them with technical assistance in preventing and combating terrorism; the need to quickly arrive at a comprehensive convention to combat terrorism; and the role of the international community in combating terrorism. In that regard, I note the role of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif and the Egyptian House of Fatwa in addressing ideologies and terrorist discourse and extremism at the national, regional and international levels.

We have concluded the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In order to make resolution 72/284 as effective as possible, like other General Assembly and Security Council resolutions related to combating terrorism, we must all be committed to it while respecting its provisions and fully and effectively implementing it; otherwise our efforts will have been in vain. It is even more important to fully implement what we agree upon.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight two points.

First, we stress the importance of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other United Nations entities in terms of the assistance they provide to Member States to combat and eradicate terrorism. I would also like to reaffirm the principle of respecting State sovereignty and the importance of national ownership. It is also important to provide States, upon their request, with projects that have a tangible impact at the national level.

Secondly, it is inconceivable, as we adopt resolutions to counter terrorism, that some countries publicly violating those resolutions by providing funding, safe haven and weapons to terrorists. They know beforehand that they will not be held accountable. If we are to be serious, we must hold all those who support terrorism accountable without exception, particularly any parties that provide support to terrorists.

In conclusion, I underscore that Egypt will always be at the forefront of the fight against terrorism. I reaffirm our serious commitment to continue cooperation and coordination with the United Nations and all friendly countries in combating this dangerous phenomenon, which threatens the present and the future of our nations.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to express our appreciation to the two co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Jordan, as well as the legal experts and Secretariat staff. Over the course of more than a month of negotiations and formal and informal dialogue, they were able to achieve the traditional outcome, one that is equally unsatisfactory to all. That is the usual result of the political and financial polarization among some in our international Organization, according to which no United Nations text or resolution can meet the needs of all.

I would like to make a few comments that I believe will lead to the development of new strategic approaches when we come to the next review, in 2020.

First, the Syrian Arab Republic is directly exposed to the dangers of terrorism, given the suffering of the Syrian people in recent years in the wake of the rise of new forms of terrorism, including international cross-border terrorism. Such new forms of terrorism evolve between the reviews of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy every two years. We all know about cross-border terrorism, about Médecins Sans Frontières, pharmacists without borders, armies without borders and even clowns without borders.

Although we understand the reasons that led to certain proposals for paragraphs about the dangers accompanied by the return of so-called foreign terrorist fighters to their countries or to third countries, we cannot accept the motives that led the delegations of certain States to deliberately reject our paragraphs calling for recognition by all Member States of the real causes and circumstances that led to the evolution and exacerbation of this dangerous phenomenon, and for the recognition of the collusive responsibility of some parties in the international community and the tort liability of others for this bloody, unprecedented phenomenon.

We are not repeating ourselves when we state that, if the international community had shouldered its responsibilities from the very outset; if the early-warning system had been applied by the Governments of Member States; if information on counter-terrorism had been exchanged rather than denied; if the international community had heard our pleas over the course of seven years; if it had seen the collusion between certain States and intelligence services that allowed the flows of tens of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters from more than 101 States Members of this international Organization towards Syria and Iraq; if all our pleas had been heard, we would have completely eliminated this phenomenon and we would not be here today discussing the danger of the return of such fighters to their countries or to a third country.

But that was the inevitable result of the collusion of some and the indifference of others. In this regard, we believe that the crisis is related not to the legal texts and instruments on combating terrorism, but rather to the lack of political will of certain States and Governments to combat terrorism, to the extent of using terrorism as a tool for military and political intervention against other States.

Secondly, with regard to preventing violent extremism, my country, Syria, reiterates its firm position pertaining to this concept and still believes that it is impossible to draw clear lines between extremism when it is linked to religious and political motives, and the violent extremism conducive to terrorism. We have provided various examples of that on several occasions. Those present are aware that thousands of foreign terrorist fighters were classified by the security services of their countries as dangerous but not violent and had been placed under continuous surveillance. Nonetheless, their non-violent extremism led them to become foreign terrorist fighters, and their Governments allowed them to go to Syria and Iraq. Some returned to carry out terrorist attacks in their homeland or country of residence, as happened in Great Britain, Belgium, France and the United States of America. Some United Nations Members have called those foreign terrorist fighters — including European terrorists, Australian terrorists, Arab terrorists and Muslim terrorists — members of Syria's moderate opposition. All, in fact, have been labelled members of Syria's moderate opposition or jihadists. When they shed blood in Syria they were called jihadists, and when they returned to their countries they were called terrorists.

I recall that the former French Foreign Minister, Mr. Laurent Fabius, said in Morocco on 12 December 2012 that French jihadists had done a good job in Syria. The French Prime Minister, who was Minister of the Interior before becoming Prime Minister, had already made a statement that was even more dangerous when he said that nothing could be done to prevent French jihadists from going to Syria. A Prime Minister and a Minister for Foreign Affairs of a permanent member of the Security Council made those statements in 2012, but the jihadists whom they sent to us in Syria and Iraq were called terrorists when they returned to France.

Our partners in the United Nations should acknowledge, during the course of the review, that there are differences of opinion regarding the definition and explanation of the concept of violent extremism conducive to terrorism, and that there are national considerations that govern the approach adopted by every State to combating extremism. We would like to express our deep regret at the approach adopted by some delegations that involved cutting financing for United Nations projects and programmes aimed at State capacity-building in counter-terrorism and counter-extremism. We would remind those States that the Charter of the United Nations is based on the principles of justice, equality and mutual respect, and not on immoral values. We believe that the restriction of funding by a donor gives that donor the power to impose its political position on others.

Thirdly, my country expresses its appreciation for the support and positive approach of many delegations regarding the Syrian and Iranian joint proposal for reforms to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre in order to ensure transparency and participation. The Centre belongs to Member States, not to those who fund it. We therefore recognize the political motives that allowed certain delegations to refuse to allow the main shortcomings in the work of the Centre to be addressed. We have clearly highlighted those shortcomings, and many delegations, including Member States in its consultative body, have supported us.

The Syrian Arab Republic will dissociate itself from the Centre and will henceforth refuse to recognize its activities because it lacks transparency, integrity and inclusivity. My country will continue to oppose all proposals to fund the Centre from the United Nations regular budget unless the serious problems regarding its working methods are resolved. We emphatically reject the domination by one country in particular of the affairs and activities of the Centre so as to turn it into a private enterprise operating from within the United Nations.

Fourthly, from the outset of the informal negotiations my Government had expected certain States to object to any paragraph that included new proposals for combating terrorist hate discourse on the Internet and social media. We were convinced that those same delegations would oppose any international convention or United Nations mechanism to monitor narratives supporting extremism, terrorist incitement recruiting operations or the funding and planning of terrorist attacks. I referred to all of those points in the statement I made yesterday, when I said that the United States delegation was opposed to a reference being made to the incitement of terrorism on the Internet under the pretext that this would be a violation of freedom of expression (see A/72/PV.100). This is the latest joke we have heard.

It is the peak of political and moral hypocrisy when certain Governments believe that freedom of expression and Internet communication are nobler than the fundamental right of each individual to live safely and in peace away from the danger of terrorism. I do not believe that we and most member States in this Hall are naive. We are aware that the motives behind the rejection by certain Governments of any United Nations role in monitoring violent discourse on the Internet has to do with narrow political goals and economic interests that seek to dominate Internet technology and the global market and continue, of course, to manipulate the recruitment of combatants in order to send them to our region. The States that planned for terrorism then send their armies to our region under the pretext of combating the terrorists whom they themselves sent to us.

In conclusion, we believe that the traditional approach of reviewing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy every two years should be reconsidered, given that the mounting dangers of terrorism and its new patterns require a serious, collective response that transcends the narrow political motives of certain Governments, which sometimes rise to the level of supporting terrorism and threatening international peace and security. We are talking not about conclusions or hypotheses, but about a database of information and confessions that my Government hs obtained on terrorist armed groups and foreign terrorist fighters.

We are also talking about realities and facts within the United Nations. Some permanent members of the Security Council have refused requests to include individuals, entities and groups on the sanctions lists related to the organizations Da'esh and Al-Qaida, for the sole reason that these requests come from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. More than a year ago we requested the inclusion of the terrorist organization Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham on the terrorist list, but the American, British and French delegations rejected our request because the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic had made it. Recently, both the United States and the Security Council added this entity to their terrorist lists. When we made the request we were turned down, but when the United States included that entity on its terrorist list, so did the Security Council.

Today we join the consensus based on our belief that the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is important despite our serious concerns over certain paragraphs and the fact that some delegations have tried to include concepts that have nothing to do with either counter-terrorism or its pillars. This would negate our collective efforts on counter-terrorism, thereby making the Strategy irrelevant.

The meeting rose at 1.05 pm.

United Nations A/72/PV.102

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Seventy-second session
Official Records

102nd plenary meeting

Tuesday, 26 June 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák . . . . (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Report of the Secretary-General (A/72/840)

Mr. Suan (Myanmar): I would like to express our sincere appreciation to co-facilitators Ambassador Kai Sauer of Finland and Ambassador Sima Sami Bahous of Jordan for their tireless efforts and commendable leadership throughout the complex negotiation rounds to review the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/72/PV.101).

Terrorism remains one of the most serious threats to peace and stability in the world today. No country is immune from these modern-day, non-traditional security challenges, and no country can deal with these threats alone. The tactic of terrorist attacks and the landscape of global terrorism are transforming over time. Consequently, our collective response against terrorism must address the numerous parallel and interlinked global terror networks. In that respect, the return and relocation of foreign terrorist fighters is becoming one of the most rapidly evolving threats to countries. Therefore, it is all the more crucial to take concerted multilateral measures to respond effectively to the emerging transnational and multifaceted nature of terrorism.

Myanmar condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and violent extremism promoting terrorism. The current crisis in Rakhine was ignited by the unprovoked attacks of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), also known as Harakah Al-Yaqin. According to international intelligence sources, the group has been guided and supported by foreign terrorist fighters. The recent revelation of the massacre of 99 innocent ethnic Hindus committed by ARSA on the same day that the group attacked 30 police outposts has unmasked the true face of ARSA. The terror acts of ARSA continue today. On 9 May, a group of four to six ARSA terrorists entered one of the refugee camps in Balukhali and stabbed 46-year-old Mohamed Faisal Ulhaq to death. Recently, on 18 June, a community leader named Arifullah of the Balukhali 2 camp was also hacked to death. It was reported that Faisal Ulhaq was advocating for the return of internally displaced persons to Rakhine and that Arifullah had criticized ARSA to fellow displaced people in the camp.

Our utmost concern is that, with the support of regional and international terrorist organizations, ARSA will become part of regional terrorism networks. Any support, including moral support for terrorists — wittingly or unwittingly — must be avoided. Therefore, I would like to stress the importance of monitoring ARSA activities in the region and their links with foreign terrorist fighters. In that regard, we would like to request of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and the Office of

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Counter-Terrorism to closely monitor ARSA activities at both the regional and the international levels.

Myanmar welcomes the sixth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The review process has provided a venue for Member States to reflect on and share their experiences in countering new terrorism phenomena across the four pillars of the Strategy. We support the full implementation of the Strategy through the United Nations system in a transparent, comprehensive and balanced manner.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to affirm Myanmar's full cooperation with and support for United Nations counter-terrorism agencies. We are also looking forward to the contributions of the Office of Counter-Terrorism and CTED to balanced and effective counter-terrorism activities and in providing assistance to countries in their national efforts to combat terrorism.

Mr. Gonzalez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation thanks Ambassadors Sima Sami Bahous of Jordan and Kai Sauer of Finland, as well as their teams, for leading the process of reviewing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Colombia emphatically rejects acts of terrorism and violent extremism in all of their forms and manifestations committed whenever, by whomever and regardless of their motivations, because they are criminal and unjustifiable.

The adoption today of the measures identified in the sixth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy bolsters the legitimacy of our efforts as an international community and the contribution of the General Assembly as a main organ of the United Nations. It is the obligation of Member States to implement the Global Strategy in a multidisciplinary, comprehensive manner that is balanced in its consideration of the four pillars. This sixth review of the Strategy has made progress in achieving the balanced implementation to which we have committed. Nevertheless, we must make even greater progress in prevention and in the promotion and safeguarding of human rights, along with differentiated gender measures for a more comprehensive framework for the prevention and restitution of victims.

States have witnessed the emergence of new types of threats to international peace and security related to terrorism since the last review, in 2016. That is why we firmly back the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which has highlighted the need to move ahead with concerted action that goes beyond military and security measures to enforce the law and seeks to comprehensively solve problems related to development, good governance, human rights and international humanitarian law.

Colombia also considers offering care to victims and guaranteeing their human rights to be a fundamental pillar for safeguarding and promoting human rights. Victims of terrorism must be heard, and States must have mechanisms for the protection and promotion of their rights and their recognition. We welcome the creation of the new United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, with a firm mandate to create policies and coordinate and support capacity-building of Member States, as well as the efforts of the Secretary-General to increase the coordination and coherence of the system, particularly the creation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. Only through the strategic promotion of the coordination and coherence of counter-terrorist activities can we achieve more effective action.

Colombia is a member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and promotes the adoption, implementation and enforcement of the various international protocols on terrorism, as well as the resolutions of the Security Council, as effective mechanisms to prevent, sanction and eliminate terrorism through close cooperation. Colombia deems it vital to combat the financing of terrorist groups, which sometimes and in some regions creates a link between terrorist groups and groups with ties to organized crime. Such links are varied and have various manifestations, ranging from the mere coexistence of those illicit groups to their cooperation and convergence. The nexus is therefore complex, dynamic and context-dependent, which has implications for international, regional and national political and operational responses. The Organization and its Member States should continue to study and analyse how those links manifest themselves and how to combat them. Consequently, it is important to participate in the counter-terrorism efforts of international, regional and subregional organizations, the private sector and civil society.

Finally, we must intensify international cooperation in areas such as national institution- and capacity-building, the creation and exchange of specialized knowledge and the sharing of experience and best practices, as well as the creation of effective mechanisms for exchanging information. My country has made great efforts to implement norms to combat terrorism, including the full enforcement of the applicable Security Council. resolutions

Nevertheless, the fight against terrorism will not be entirely successful unless we reach a general agreement on international terrorism. Many years of debate have been devoted to reaching such an agreement, and the gravity of the phenomenon of international terrorism reqwires us to take definitive action, regardless of the difficulty of doing so. Reaching an agreement would allow us to complement existing instruments on the matter, address persisting loopholes and strengthen the binding international legal framework for the fight against this scourge.

Mrs. Furman (Israel): I would like to thank the Ambassadors of Finland and Jordan for taking on the challenging task of co-facilitating these extremely difficult but important negotiations. Their efforts and those of their experts are much appreciated. I also want to thank the member States that have shown creativity and boldness while navigating different views and positions and bringing us to the goal line.

I can think of no topic that is more timely or urgent than that of countering terrorism. Twelve years ago, when the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was first adopted, most countries believed terrorism was a distant problem — one that afflicted certain nations in distant parts of the world. Today, we know better. We know countless families that have been devastated by suicide attacks in markets or subways by terrorists who plow trucks into sidewalks crowded with pedestrians and by radical extremists who open fire in a concert hall or take innocent people hostage in a supermarket.

Terrorism is a plague that can strike any nation and any region, from Boston to Buenos Aires and from Berlin to Baghdad. In recent years, we have seen acts of terror grow in frequency, size, scope and sophistication, taking more and more innocent lives. That trend will not reverse itself. It is up to us — the international community — to formulate a strategy to counter this plague.

Allow me to address a particularly significant and, indeed, unprecedented development in resolution 72/284. For the first time, a General Assembly resolution condemns the use of human shields, one of the most barbaric tactics utilized by terrorist organizations on a daily basis.

In recent years, the international community has been forced to grapple with a changing paradigm in international warfare and a challenge that Israel has faced for decades — the asymmetric warfare of terrorism. Much of international law is rooted in the assumption that armies battle armies and countries face off against countries. Today, however, that is less and less often the case. Terrorist organizations do not abide by rules, norms or laws. And although international law is intended to be a constructive tool to minimize the loss of lives, terrorists increasingly abuse it as a tool to maximize the taking of lives.

And so we are forced to confront an enemy with no red lines and for whom nothing is off limits — an enemy that systematically and intentionally targets and attacks civilians; an enemy that stores weapons and launches rockets from within its own densely populated urban areas, including inside schools and hospitals; an enemy that hides behind civilians. Their calculation is as simple as it is cynical — either civilian lives will be the fighters' defence or civilian deaths will be their rallying cry.

For that reason, today's resolution is historic. For the first time, a General Assembly resolution includes a clear and strong condemnation of one of the most heinous tactics employed by non-State actors — the exploitation of civilians and their use as human shields. The resolution clearly condemns the use of schools and hospitals for storing weapons and launching terror attacks — tactics that are regularly used by terrorist organizations, including Hizbullah and Hamas. That important development is a crucial first step in the right direction. It is also worth noting that the resolution comes just weeks after another historic first in the General Assembly, when the plurality in the Hall voted to condemn Hamas for those exact crimes.

The fact that the Assembly has today acknowledged the difficult reality that so many countries, including Israel, confront in fighting terror, is of great value. Terrorism spares no religious group, ethnicity or nationality. Every nation is at risk. That is why we must present a united front in the fight against terrorism.

However, consensus cannot be our sole objective, especially when some seek to undermine our values and beliefs. That is why Israel has disassociated itself from the thirty-sixth preambular paragraph. Let me be clear. There is no rationale for terrorism. Unfortunately, that is exactly what some tried to do when they attempted to include new paragraphs in this resolution justifying terror if it is used for a particular political cause. That is unacceptable. We must never allow discrimination against the victims of terror from one particular country under the auspices of the United Nations. Fortunately, that cynical attempt was blocked, and we thank the Member States for rejecting it immediately.

Israel stands committed to cooperating with the international community on this matter. The international community will prevail only if we can find the will and the willingness to bridge our political differences and work together to combat the common enemy of terror.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): My delegation thanks the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly for their comprehensive statements, and we take note of the Secretary-General's report (A/72/840). We take this opportunity to thank the Office of Counter Terrorism for its work. We are confident that the Office will help strengthen the capability of the United Nations system and enhance coordination and coherence across the 38 Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force entities in order to ensure the balanced implementation of the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Sri Lanka is committed to cooperating with the Office in its key functions and welcomes the focus on providing capacity-building assistance to Member States.

Sri Lanka condemns terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism in all their forms and manifestations. It is in that context that the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy becomes essential as a rallying call to action. All acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

Though we have made progress in the implementation of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy since 2006, we have encountered many challenges as a result of the changing face of terrorism and violent extremism, not least of all due to the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, the financing of terrorism, the rapid advancement of technology, porous borders and large movements of humanity due to violence.

International networks with linkages to organized crime are a critical lifeline for terrorists and violent extremist groups. It is therefore imperative for all Member States to pool their resources and share intelligence, databases and expertise to counter that issue. Transnational organized crime is increasingly a part of the arsenal of terrorists and is directly related to financing of terrorism.

As a country that once suffered under the yoke of terrorism for nearly 30 years and successfully eradicated that scourge from its shores in 2009, Sri Lanka is acutely aware of the need to share information, technology, databases and intelligence in combating terrorism. Information-sharing must take place not only at the international or cross-regional level but also among local institutions and other counter-terrorism mechanisms, including the private sector and civil society. Countering terrorism requires not only a whole-of-United Nations approach but also a whole-of-country approach.

In two days, the United Nations will hold the first-ever high-level conference of heads of counter-terrorism agencies of Member States. It is our hope that it will be an opportunity for Member States to create networks and partnerships, and share information and strategies in order to strengthen cooperation, as is envisaged in the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In that regard, it is important that media — especially with the rise in social media tools — help to disseminate the values that will foster a culture of peace and a forum for dialogue and understanding rather than a platform for hate and bigotry. We must actively seek to prevent the abuse of social media to promote the culture of racism, hate and intolerance.

We must also give due consideration to the fourth pillar of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by ensuring that human rights and the rule of law are observed in global efforts to counter terrorism. Although terrorists have dehumanized us, the international community should not embrace the lawlessness of the terrorists and must never abandon its common humanity, which is what binds us together and gives us strength in our fight against terror. At the same time, terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. Counter-terrorism is as much about military strategy and intelligence as it is about winning hearts and minds.

In many parts of the world, violent extremism targets vulnerable and marginalized communities — children, minorities, women and girls. It is therefore imperative that we proactively include and engage the entities of the United Nations system that deal with children, minorities, women and girls.

The General Assembly unanimously adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. As noble as those objectives are, we must demonstrate a commitment to closing ranks and making a determined and singular effort to overcome this challenge. In that regard, we must recognize that the building blocks for a normative framework in strengthening international cooperation in these areas are contained in the efforts undertaken by the General Assembly, particularly the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism and the Working Group on measures to eliminate international terrorism, which have already resulted in the adoption of a large number of sectoral conventions on the suppression of terrorism.

Despite the support of most Member States and despite having been mandated by the General Assembly to come up with a comprehensive legal framework to fill possible gaps in the existing sectoral conventions on terrorism, it is regrettable that we have not been able to break the current impasse surrounding the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Much work has been accomplished in the Ad Hoc Committee. What remains is for the necessary political will to be harnessed so as to conclude such a Convention.

It is pertinent at this time to recall that the conclusion of the comprehensive convention was one of the key components of the 2006 plan of action to combat terrorism. The detailed elements of a comprehensive package has been before the Ad Hoc Committee and the Working Group since 2007. It is time to conclude the comprehensive convention so that the international community can send a strong signal of its collective will to combat terrorism and contribute to the effective implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

In conclusion, although much more could have been achieved, Sri Lanka nevertheless welcomes and supports the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We wish to express our deep appreciation to the co-facilitators of the sixth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Ambassadors of Jordan and Finland, and to their experts for their efforts in this complex task, and we reaffirm Sri Lanka's commitment to the implementation of the Strategy.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of my country, the Sudan, aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (see A/72/PV.101). My delegation would like to deliver the following statement in its national capacity.

As everybody knows, the Sudan has a vast surface area bordering on seven countries, most of which are facing security and political issues. Our borders are extensive and difficult to control. The geographical location of the Sudan has made it a platform for certain terrorist groups, which benefit from those porous borders that are difficult to monitor. Combating terrorism is therefore a priority for our State and all its institutions. It requires cooperation and consultation with neighbouring countries and the international community.

Mr. Sauer (Finland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Sudan has ratified all international conventions pertaining to the struggle against terrorism, as well as regional African and Arab conventions. My country actively participates in the work of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the area of counter-terrorism. We believe that the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is one of the most important international legal frameworks for guiding national legislation and our national counter-terrorism mechanisms, which are consistent and harmonious with the Strategy.

We are waging an ongoing war against terrorism, first and foremost, in order to defend our values and human principles and strengthen human rights, the rule of law, coexistence, prosperity and peace. The Sudan therefore condemns all forms and manifestations of terrorism. We underscore our necessary cooperation and involvement in implementing the Strategy in a global, sustained and coherent framework based on the four pillars of the Strategy through a balanced and comprehensive approach, which confirms that the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy is incumbent upon Member States, while taking into consideration the important role of the United Nations in strengthening cooperation and coherence at the national, regional and international levels, with the aim of supporting Member States, upon request, and to ensure the balanced implementation of the Strategy.

My country is working to combat terrorism in tandem with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Our efforts have had a positive impact on reducing the activities of extremist elements and groups and limiting their spread. We have also adopted laws in that respect and acceded to the relevant international and regional conventions. In particular, we have focused on the conditions that give rise to terrorism, and decided to enact prohibitions against terrorism, build capacities and ensure respect for the rule of law while combating terrorism.

This past year, the Sudan deposited the draft of its national counter-terrorism strategy with the competent United Nations offices on counter-terrorism. The strategy is based on smart partnership between the Government and all sectors of society. It is based on dialogue, conflict prevention, good governance, human rights, the rule of law, the participation of local communities, building youth capacities, gender equality, women's empowerment, education, capacity-building and information and communication technologies. That is happening in various ways, including via the Internet and social media. We have also focused on various goals to address the conditions conducive to terrorism, most important of which is enacting the political measures necessary to combat terrorism, based on strengthening the rule of law and the relevant State institutions, and combating transnational and organized crime.

We have also adopted social measures to combat terrorism, including measures to ensure security and social justice, reduce poverty, strengthen social cohesion and foster harmony among the various strata of society. Such measures allow us to embed a cultural vision of combating terrorism so as to raise religious awareness and strengthen the values of moderation and dialogue. We are also working to build capacities related to combating electronic and online crime, money-laundering and financing terrorism, combating organized crime, monitoring the borders and strengthening the role of civil-society organizations to help them combat terrorism and address its root causes, as we are all facing this threat together.

Practical experience has shown that the security approach alone is an insufficient way of addressing terrorism and extremism. Accordingly, the Sudan has launched a pilot project in the area of changing the mindset of terrorists and their way of thinking, first, through the prevention phase, by disseminating the values of moderation, tolerance and moderation as a civilized approach while targeting certain elements and safe havens that show signs of extremism; and, secondly, the treatment phase, in which we pursue dialogue with detained elements accused of terrorism and help shift their mindset with the help of imams and specialists, while trying to reintegrate them into the community. Thus we benefit by involving them in the process of addressing violence, extremism and terrorism.

Although resolution 72/284, on the sixth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, was adopted by consensus, we remained concerned about the attempts of some to expand the meaning of the term "violent extremism". Some even tried to insert paragraphs that would have allowed for the weakening of State sovereignty and interference in the internal affairs of other States, which could limit national ownership of their affairs at a time when the gap is widening and we need to come together around shared ideas and resolve.

The question of violent extremism was one of the most controversial issues accompanying the Strategy review. We saw a prime example of that this year, when consensus might have been lost had it not been for the wisdom of the two co-facilitators and the great flexibility of the States that have real concerns regarding this term. That is why all members of the General Assembly should consider such concerns and attempt to find solutions. The term "violent extremism" does not currently have a common consensual definition. It cannot be tied to a religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. That is openly and clearly recognized in the seventh preambular paragraph of resolution 72/284. This is important so that we do not get caught in the trap of stereotypes whenever we speak of terrorism. We must also be alert to any potential conflation of the concepts of combating terrorism and violent extremism, while avoiding any overlap and misunderstanding.

Paragraph 13 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/72/840), on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, is sufficient evidence of the conflation of the terms "terrorism" and "violent extremism". It is important that the report of the Secretary-General be consistent with this central point, particularly in relation to the conditions conducive to terrorism and its structural context. It is impossible to clarify things if we do not recognize the problem and engage in a dialogue in order to resolve it, so that we can achieve a world of peace, security and stability while respecting the Charter, international law and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. That will be possible only through an international political and economic system in which justice, transparency and impartiality are ensured, with the aim of achieving development and peace for all nations around the world.

The overall approach to addressing the phenomenon of terrorism represents one of the most important ways to fight and block it. It is not useful to focus on the outcome of this phenomenon, but it is important to address its root causes and main safe havens through a comprehensive and balanced approach that is focused not only on security and military solutions, but which also on all of its cultural and social dimensions. In this context, my delegation underscores that the General Assembly represents the most effective organ to deal with this phenomenon in all its dimensions and aspects.

Our national counter-terrorism efforts and regional and international cooperation in the context of the Global Strategy require technical support to strengthen capacities and allow national mechanisms to fully play their role on the basis of cooperation and mutual respect, without prejudice to national sovereignty. Joint efforts must be undertaken by States and the various components of civil-society organizations, in addition to the media, research and academia, in monitoring different phenomena, carrying out in-depth studies and leading awareness and enlightenment campaigns.

In conclusion, combating terrorism, achieving balanced development, supporting progress and reconstruction programmes in developing countries, particularly African countries, and enhancing North-South dialogue represent collectively a comprehensive approach to addressing the threats of terrorism through efforts aimed at establishing a just and balanced international system.

In this regard, the Sudan rejects the unilateral measures taken by certain States that accuse others of supporting and sponsoring terrorism. That can only stoke tensions in international relations and lead to politicization at the international level. The achievement, through collective and unified international resolve, of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is vital. Terrorism must be combated in all its forms and manifestations, whoever the perpetratorsmay be, without associating terrorism with any religion, civilization or race.

The Sudan expresses its satisfaction at the bilateral negotiations being conducted with other countries. It reaffirms that international and regional cooperation is the best way to promote counter-terrorism efforts while respecting international law and human rights. The Sudan will therefore pursue its efforts to combat global terrorism in a way that respects international and regional commitments and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): I would like to express my sincere thanks to the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting on the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. I also would like to extend our appreciation and thanks, from this rostrum, to the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representative of Jordan, Ambassador Sima Bahous, and our colleague the Permanent Representative of Finland, Ambassador Kai Sauer, for their tireless efforts in facilitating the process and helping to reach consensus on resolution 72/284, on the sixth review of the Strategy.

My delegation would like to reiterate its strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including those acts and activities that support, encourage, justify, promote or glorify it directly or indirectly. Terrorism has no religion, no homeland, no borders and no justification. It should in no way be associated with any particular culture, religion, civilization or human community. The fight against violent extremism and terrorism must also include the rejection of xenophobia and Islamophobia, which are emerging as the new faces of violent extremism.

Algeria supports the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and underlines the need for the balanced implementation of its four pillars. In that regard, I would like to stress the necessity of preserving the biennial review process, which is aimed at enhancing the Strategy and adapting it to the changing requirements for combating terrorism, including the evolving challenges it presents. That is also required to ensure the effective implementation of its four pillars in a comprehensive manner.

My delegation would like to underline the importance of consolidating efforts with regard to the Strategy by enhancing cooperation at the bilateral, regional and international levels, strengthening capabilities and exchanging best practices and expertise on combating terrorism. We welcome the establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, a major development that is also reflected upon in this year's resolution, and we reiterate our full support for its efforts as well as those of the relevant United Nations bodies and entities of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, including those that signed the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact in support of the implementation of the Strategy. It is important to highlight the role of the United Nations Centre for Counter-Terrorism in consolidating the Strategy's pillars and encouraging Member States to provide it with adequate financial and human resources.

My country appreciates the level of our cooperation with United Nations mechanisms and specialized programmes in combating terrorism and is willing to develop it further. In addition, Algeria's membership in the Global Counterterrorism Forum reflects our commitment to participating in every relevant forum to promote international cooperation against terrorism. In that context, my country co-chairs with Canada the working group on capacity-building in the West African region. Algeria has also hosted and participated in a number of coordination and assessment activities aimed at strengthening capabilities and exchanging expertise in order to implement best practices in addressing terrorism in all its aspects.

We welcome the affirmation by the General Assembly of its respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and unity of all States, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations within the framework of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Algeria has consistently called for that commitment to be observed, although we strongly believe that any selective approach to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations aimed at excluding the principle of the right to self-determination of peoples under foreign occupation is not acceptable and is contrary to the letter and spirit of the Charter. It is therefore satisfactory that, for the second review in a row, the General Assembly and member States have reaffirmed their determination to continue to do all they can to resolve conflicts and foreign occupation; confront oppression; eradicate poverty; and promote sustained economic growth, sustainable development, global prosperity, good governance, human rights for all and the rule of law; improve intercultural understanding; and ensure respect for all religious values, beliefs and cultures.

It is worth noting that resolution 72/284 addresses the phenomenon of the return and relocation of foreign terrorist fighters, which poses a real and growing threat to international peace and security. The question of countering terrorist narratives and the need to protect youth, children and women and to give special attention to the role of victims of terrorism are also among the updated aspects that mark this year's review. We also see merit in the reflection on the contribution to preventing and countering terrorism and extremism and on a meaningful implementation of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063.

We also stress the importance of engaging in a consultative process with member States and regional organizations prior to the submission, no later than May 2019, of the report of the Secretary-General that is requested in the resolution's paragraph 83. The report is to present concrete recommendations on and options as to ways to assess the impact and progress of the implementation of the Strategy by United Nations entities, so as to inform discussions among member States in advance of the seventh review of the Strategy, to be held during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Since the most recent review, in 2016, Algeria has taken significant qualitative steps and made tremendous efforts to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism, as reflected in the written contribution that we submitted for the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Strategy. These steps consolidate the achievements of the historic reconciliation initiative promoted by the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, in the form of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which was adopted by referendum by an overwhelming majority of the Algerian people.

Based on our experience, we can testify that, as important as it may be, the total defeat of terrorism through security measures alone will never suffice. We firmly believe — and we have incorporated this belief in our national strategy — that the battle against this scourge must be waged daily and encompass all areas of activity, including the political, institutional, economic, cultural, religious, educational and social realms. Any success in this respect will require the active involvement of all national institutions, civil society and all citizens. We also emphasize the need to shield each citizen and society as a whole from any influence or manipulation by those who advocate terrorism or extremism. This requires strengthening participatory democracy, the rule of law and social justice as well as promoting development that offers equal opportunities for each and every citizen. All these aspects are comprehensively addressed and well framed in our national plan for deradicalization and the prevention of violent extremism.

Obviously, the fight against terrorism and violent extremism requires sustained bilateral, regional and international cooperation. Algeria's efforts to combat terrorism have always been aimed at increasing regional and international cooperation, even before the manifestation of the major acts of international terrorism that the world has experienced. From the outset, Algeria's tireless efforts to strengthen Africa's counter-terrorism efforts have resulted in the adoption of several regional instruments and initiatives that are playing a very important role today in enhancing Africa's effectiveness in this regard.

The African Union has entrusted President Bouteflika with the mandate of coordinating counter-terrorism efforts in Africa. In the Sahel region, the concept of coordination and cooperation reaches its fullest expression in the context of the prevailing situation, which requires both coordination and a strengthening of the capacities of the countries of the region. In that regard, my country has engaged in a concerted approach through various cooperation mechanisms. As an example, just two days ago, on 24 and 25 June, Algeria hosted the third round of the regional conversation on preventing violent extremism in the Sahel-Sahara region, which we co-organized together with the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, the International Peace Institute and the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism.

Algeria hopes that the resolution we have adopted by consensus will be another effective building block in our collective endeavour to combat and eliminate international terrorism. We look forward to the convening immediately after today's debate of the first-ever high-level conference of heads of counter-terrorism agencies of Member States of the United Nations, which will take place, upon the initiative of the Secretary-General, on 28 and 29 June.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation joins in congratulating Ambassadors Kai Sauer of Finland and Sima Sami Bahous of Jordan and their respective teams for the professionalism with which they have successfully completed the delicate process of reviewing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Peru attaches great importance to this tool in the face of an ever-changing threat. In this regard, we welcome the new review and reaffirm our commitment to the shared responsibility to address the scourge of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

We stress that the establishment of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, as a result of the previous review of the Strategy, has helped to improve the coordination and coherence of efforts within the United Nations. The signing of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact among the bodies of the system also represents an important step forward.

We consider it crucial to strengthen the synergies between the Office, the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, within their respective mandates, with a view to providing greater and more comprehensive support to States based on effective needs assessments in the area of technical assistance. This should help to implement the Global Strategy in a manner that ensures greater integration and balance among all its pillars, in accordance with the obligations of Member States under international law, human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law.

We deem it important to strengthen our action against violent extremism leading to terrorism. We must address its root causes, including poverty, inequality and injustice, and weave a strong social fabric, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The fight against extremism is also a struggle in the field of ideas — battling violent rhetoric with a message that speaks of peace, reconciliation and the future. We must work together with civil society, the private sector and academia, and encourage the greater participation of women and young people. Accordingly, with full respect for freedom of expression and association, we must prevent the use by terrorist groups of social networks and other civil-society platforms to propagate and disseminate violent ideologies, recruit supporters, attract funding and justify their actions and those of their leaders.

The work of financial-intelligence and customs entities is crucial in the fight against the financing of terrorism. The phenomenon we are facing requires that we improve the existing mechanisms for cooperation and information exchange between these entities, both nationally and internationally. We also stress the need to identify and address the links between terrorism and transnational organized crime, an issue that Peru has been promoting within the framework of its current participation in the Security Council.

Finally, we welcome the current review's inclusion of important measures concerning the return of foreign terrorist fighters and the protection of critical infrastructure, sexual violence as a terrorist tactic, and the establishment of the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism.

I conclude by recalling the importance of finalizing the drafting of the comprehensive convention on international terrorism; we must redouble our efforts in that regard. I assure the President that he has the undying support of my delegation in that endeavour.

Mr. Herczynski (European Union): I am honoured to deliver remarks on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States on the occasion of the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

Let me start by welcoming the consensual adoption of resolution 72/284, on the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and by thanking the co-facilitators for their tireless efforts in that process.

The European Union pursues a comprehensive approach to combating and preventing terrorism with respect for human rights and the rule of law at its core. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, together with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, help guide European Union efforts in counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

We fully support the role of the United Nations in the prevention of and fight against terrorism. The deepening of the international consensus and the strengthening of international efforts to combat terrorism remain key objectives for the European Union. To that end, the European Union and the United Nations will shortly agree on a framework for enhancing our partnership in that area. Over the coming two years, that framework will guide our joint efforts to advance the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and to assist Member States, as appropriate, in their efforts to fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions. We will focus our enhanced partnership efforts on Iraq, Africa, and Central, South and South-East Asia, as well as on the priority global concern of preventing violent extremism.

This biennial review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is an opportunity to strengthen consensus and refocus the attention of the international community on emerging and evolving issues. In that regard, the European Union welcomes the fact that this resolution provides several important updates with regard to the threat of foreign terrorist fighters, including returnees and relocators, and the financing of terrorism, to name only two examples.

The EU takes this opportunity to reaffirm the importance of the balanced implementation of all four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Each pillar is of equal importance in our joint fight against terrorism, and although we think that improvement is possible in that respect, the consensus reached in negotiations during this review process sends an important signal that we remain united in our efforts to create a strong front in the face of all forms and manifestations of terrorism and violent extremism, while upholding respect for human rights. We believe that a comprehensive approach is particularly critical as States grapple with the prospect of returning or relocating fighters from conflict zones and focus on victims of terrorism, including family members,and the impact on homegrown violent extremism.

While the resolution represents a hard-won consensus, we must acknowledge persistent differences between member States on fundamental issues such as the concept of the prevention of violent extremism, the identification of conditions conducive to radicalization, the role that civil society plays in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism, and the importance of paying due attention to the gender dimension. In our collective efforts to implement the Global Strategy over the coming biennium, we must seek to bridge those divides. In that respect, the European Union looks to the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism.

The EU and its member States fully support a whole-of-society approach to implementing the Global Strategy and call for strengthened collaboration and cooperation between Governments and civil society. By embracing human rights and the rule of law and working to eliminate corruption, Governments can create an enabling environment for local authorities and civil society to counter radicalization and violent extremism.

In that regard, we welcome Under-Secretary-General Voronkov's strong expressions of support for the need to increase efforts to prevent violent extremism and for the important role that civil society can and must play. We agree with the Under-Secretary-General's assertion at the recent United Nations Development Programme Global Meeting on Preventing Violent Extremism, held in Oslo, that the United Nations needs to do more to strengthen cooperation with civil society on preventing violent extremism. The EU fully supports that position and commits to advancing that objective in partnership with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, other United Nations entities and Member States.

Likewise, the EU and its member States are encouraged by the positive and concrete United Nations reforms achieved in the area of counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism. Reforming the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture — with the appointment of Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and the creation of the Office of Counter-Terrorism — was an important and necessary step to bring coherence and strengthen the role of the United Nations in driving progress in our collective efforts to realize the objectives of the Global Strategy. The EU agrees with the Secretary-General's view, as set out in his report (A/72/840), that, going forward, the work of the Office of Counter-Terrorism should be consolidated around the development of global policy and coordination. The European Union is a natural partner to the United Nations in that pursuit, and it remains committed to continuing its close and energetic support for that endeavour. The ongoing discussions on the reform of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre should be pursued with the aim of strengthening the efficiency of the Centre and the impact of its activities to improve the planning, implementation and transparency of funding and governance, drawing on best practices of United Nations partnership funds, multi-donor trust funds and the relevant programmes inside and outside the United Nations.

The EU and its member States are encouraged by the commitment of the United Nations to strengthening coordination towards an all-of-United-Nations approach in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism. We welcome the parameters for strengthening coordination set forth in the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. The Compact's goal of achieving better coherence, transparency and coordination among the many United Nations entities involved in work on counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism addresses a priority concern of the EU and States Members of the United Nations. We trust that through the implementation of the Compact and enhanced collaboration with external partners, the United Nations system can have a better impact and provide stronger and more efficient technical assistance and capacity-building support to Member States.

We reiterate the responsibility of each State Member of the United Nations to implement the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its obligations under international law, including Security Council resolutions. We commend the work of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) in assessing, monitoring and supporting the implementation of these Security Council resolutions and applaud the reinvigorated level of collaboration and cooperation led by CTED Executive Director Coninsx and the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Voronkov, in this effort, including as reflected in the recent joint report of the Office and CTED (S/2018/435, annex).

Strong coordination and cooperation between CTED and the Office is key as they work within their mandates and in their distinct roles to ensure the effective alignment of United Nations technical and capacity-building assistance with gaps in implementation and capacity as identified by CTED.

The EU and its member States remain committed to multilateralism and support the global efforts to fight terrorism and violent extremism in support of the United Nations, in particular through the Global Counterterrorism Forum. We encourage further cooperation between the Forum and the United Nations in implementing the Global Strategy.

The EU and its member States welcome the adoption of the review resolution and commend the co-facilitators for their successful efforts to restructure the resolution in order to align it with the main pillars of the Strategy. We will continue our steadfast support for and collaboration with the United Nations, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and Member States towards realizing the full implementation of the Strategy.

Mr. Saleh Azzam (Lebanon): Terrorism is, sadly, often associated with my region, which has suffered heinous terrorist acts throughout the years. It is unfortunate, for instance, to observe that not all terrorist attacks and incidents make the headlines or even the news any more, as they have become the gloomy reality of some of our peoples. However, this plague spares no part of the world and continues to pose a grave threat that is aimed at creating chaos and affects the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of peoples.

While Lebanon reiterates its firm condemnation of terrorism, it rejects any attempt to associate it with a religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. If anything, it should be associated with sheer cruelty. We also reject any attempt to label the right to resist foreign occupation — which is rooted in international law — with terrorism, with the aim of serving a political purpose and distorting reality.

The adoption by consensus today of resolution 72/284 highlights the importance of a multidimensional approach to preventing and combating terrorism. Here I wish to thank the Ambassadors of Jordan and Finland and their teams for their tireless efforts and valuable work in co-facilitating this sixth biennial review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

My country, which is at the forefront of the fight against terrorism, remains committed to the implementation of the four pillars of the Strategy. Our armed forces succeeded in defeating Da'esh militarily and disrupting terrorist cells. We have engaged in countering the financing of terrorism and made notable achievements. Nonetheless, we all know that to eradicate this source of evil, we have to address the deep structural causes, both internal and external, that create and fuel an environment conducive to radicalism turning into terrorism. They range from prolonged conflicts, foreign occupation and double standards to inequality and exclusion.

Young people must be at the front lines of those efforts, as they represent our present and our future. Not all individuals facing such situations of injustice and despair will follow the terrorist path, but all of them can be susceptible, to a certain degree, to falling prey to terrorist recruiters.

My country spares no effort on the preventive front. In March, we adopted a national strategy to prevent violent extremism that is the result of a lengthy and inclusive process of consultations that brought together my Government, civil society, the relevant United Nations entities and other key actors. The plan is in line with the relevant international standards such as United Nations resolutions and in particular the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The creation of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism is a step forward aimed at better assisting Member States in implementing the Strategy in a more coherent and coordinated manner, notably through enhanced capacity-building activities. The signing of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact also represents another positive addition in this regard. Furthermore, Lebanon looks forward to the United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, set to take place in two days. We believe that this is a very useful step in operationalizing and advancing the key objectives of the Strategy.

In conclusion, we must remember that our ability to uphold the rule of law and human rights is tested mainly in times of turmoil and great upheaval. Yet overlooking or compromising on human rights when responding to the terrorist threat can never be an option.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to warmly thank you, Sir, in your capacity as the Permanent Representative of Finland, and your team, as well as the Permanent Representative of Jordan and her team, for the hard work done in facilitating the negotiations on the text of the sixth biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We commend the co-facilitators for having restructured resolution 72/284 in a way that makes it more accessible, understandable and visible to actors outside the United Nations system.

I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General Voronkov for having initiated the reform of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. In our view, reform is a constant and ongoing process, and we look forward to Mr. Voronkov bringing greater professionalism, efficiency, impartiality, transparency, predictability and accountability to the Office's activities.

We also welcome the finalization of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, a framework that aims to strengthen a common action approach to coordination and coherence in the work of the United Nations system to prevent and counter terrorism and strengthen support to Member States.

We acknowledge the progress made in resolution 72/284, in particular its provisions on foreign terrorist fighters and on countering the financing of terrorism. It also addresses the conditions conducive to terrorism and violent extremism, including but not limited to prolonged unresolved conflicts; absence of the rule of law; foreign occupation; oppression; poverty; ethnic, national and religious discrimination; political exclusion; socioeconomic marginalization; and lack of good governance.

The resolution also stresses that when counter-terrorism efforts neglect the rule of law at the national and international levels and violate international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and refugee law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, they not only betray the values that they seek to uphold but may also further fuel violent extremism, which can be conducive to terrorism. It is unfortunate that manifest violations of international law and neglect of the rule of law at the international level can be witnessed in many cases worldwide.

Moreover, the resolution recalls the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, adopted by consensus at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, which encompasses important principles, inter alia, the realization of the right of all peoples living under colonial or foreign occupation to self-determination and liberation. That well-established principle has also been recognized in the first Protocol additional to the Geneva conventions. The Islamic Republic of Iran opposes any attempt to equate the legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial or foreign occupation for self-determination with terrorism.

Such equation is aimed at prolonging the occupation of the territories in question and the oppression of their peoples. Resolution 72/284 also calls on the international community to take the steps necessary to enhance cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism in a decisive, unified, coordinated, inclusive and transparent manner. That implies that selectivity or double standards and simply categorizing terrorism as good or bad based on short-term political interests, or the unilateral preparation of lists accusing other States of being so-called sponsors of terrorism, will not help the international community to uproot terrorism. By contrast, such unjustifiable, illegal and unilateral actions would only undermine international trust and cooperation in countering terrorism and therefore would be contrary to the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy's provisions and its spirit.

However, we regret the fact that the resolution does not address certain important issues. An example is the corporate responsibility of private companies in countering terrorist narratives. It is crystal-clear that the self-regulatory regime offered by private companies to remove terrorist content has proved to be ineffective. There is an urgent need to develop a United Nations convention to regulate the activities of private companies in the field of information technology, including a focus on the broad spectrum of crimes committed with the use of information and communications technology. That important notion does not appear in the resolution, and we regret it.

For decades, a number of external root causes and factors have led or contributed to the spread of terrorism. These include the unlawful use of force against other States, foreign aggression and foreign interference in the internal affairs of other States. Moreover, violations of international humanitarian law, along with the excessive and disproportionate use of military force in the name of countering terrorism, in most cases without the consent of the country concerned, have created fertile ground for vicious circles of violence and terrorism. None of those conditions was reflected in the resolution.

The other important issue that, unfortunately, is not addressed in the resolution is the urgent need to improve the efficiency of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) and bring the Centre to the level of the other United Nations entities by adopting its terms of reference in the General Assembly. Although mainstreaming transparency, inclusiveness and accountability in all United Nations entities is an important prerequisite for their efficiency, and despite the fact that the Secretary-General in his reform agenda continually calls for renewed spaces for Member States to guide system-wide actions and bring about greater transparency and accountability, UNCCT Advisory Board members continue to be appointed in a non-transparent manner and Board meetings continue to be held behind closed doors.

In an effort to improve the transparency and accountability of the UNCCT, the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the course of negotiations on the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy review resolution, proposed that the members of the Advisory Board of the Centre be elected by the General Assembly and that all Member States that are not members of the Board be invited to participate in all of its meetings as observers. The ultimate goal of that proposal was to enhance the level of engagement of Member States in the work of the UNCCT and improve its efficiency by bringing new ideas and thoughts to the Advisory Board, as well as mobilization for more resources. It is unfortunate that the resolution could not address such an important issue. However, that proposal will remain on the table for the consideration of the General Assembly. We consider the proposal to be an integral element of the systematic reform of the Office of Counter-Terrorism. It is the only option that would preserve the legitimacy, impartiality and sustainability of the UNCCT.

We would also like to request the Secretary-General to include existing flaws in the UNCCT in his report on the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by United Nations entities.

Finally, let me conclude by reiterating that the Islamic Republic of Iran remains committed to the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We stand ready to help Mr. Voronkov and his team in the discharge of their important functions in pursuing the goal of ridding the world of terrorism, and we call on all peace-loving Member States to fulfil their commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Mr. Al-Zaabi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express the appreciation of the United Arab Emirates for the sustained efforts made by the delegations of Jordan and Finland to facilitate the negotiations on the draft resolution related to the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We also welcome today's adoption of resolution 72/284 by consensus.

My country's delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (see A/72/PV.101).

The Middle East region is facing many crises caused by extremist and terrorist groups — groups that are financed and supported by certain organizations and Governments. Everyone knows that the spread of that phenomenon in our region has had a devastating impact and led to a considerable loss of human life, as well as the displacement of millions of people. In spite of the progress made by the international community to overcome terrorist groups and address security threats, more remains to be done, especially in our Arab region. We believe that we must not give terrorist groups the opportunity to reorganize themselves following the losses that they have suffered; otherwise we will lose the progress that we have made and, consequently, never be able to uproot this threat.

The sixth review of the Strategy underscored many important issues that Member States must commit to addressing so as to achieve our goal of eliminating extremism and terrorism and maintaining international peace and security. In that regard, I would like make the following comments.

First, the Strategy reaffirms the commitment of Member States to prevent and eliminate the financing of terrorist acts while criminalizing those who deliberately provide funds for the purpose of carrying out terrorist attacks. Indeed, financing is vital to terrorists, as without it they are unable to acquire weapons, recruit fighters or launch attacks. As a result, it is essential to stem the flow of funds to terrorists at the source, which requires joint actions and measures to identify the organizations and States that are financing terrorist groups, thereby violating their commitments under the Strategy and undermining international efforts to eradicate terrorism.

Secondly, the Strategy expresses concern over the growing use by terrorists and their supporters of information and communication technologies, including the Internet and the media, to encourage the perpetration of terrorist acts. In that context, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms the need to shut down media outlets that are used as platforms for promoting the plans of extremist and terrorist groups, in particular those that claim to be legal while inciting violence with the support of many States and organizations. It is also necessary to distinguish between freedom of expression, in which the United Arab Emirates believes, and hate speech, which transcends freedom of expression and incites violence and extremism. We must therefore identify such terrorist platforms and call for their closure so as to protect our nations from the danger of terrorist discourse.

We also agree with the Strategy that technology can be a powerful tool for countering the spread of terrorism. In that context, the Sawab Centre in Abu Dhabi seeks to shed light on the lies that Da'esh spreads in the media and to raise awareness among young people about the dangers of joining terrorist groups. The Centre also launches campaigns that aim to remind our people of common human values, based on tolerance and mutual acceptance.

Thirdly, the Strategy underscores the importance of fostering tolerance and pluralism to curb extremism and terrorism, and welcomes all initiatives undertaken by States in that regard. The United Arab Emirates has created and supported a number of specialized institutions, including the Council of Muslim Sages, which brings together a group of great Muslim imams who work to eliminate the causes of divisions in society and promote social cohesion. Our National Programme for Tolerance, led by the State Minister for Tolerance, includes a specific work plan to consolidate the values of peace, cultural diversity and mutual acceptance within our society. The United Arab Emirates has also launched international initiatives such as the International Institute for Tolerance and the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Tolerance Award, in order to expand horizons of understanding in the region and foster a culture of openness and civilized dialogue among the peoples of the region.

Fourthly, the Strategy underscores the important role played by young people and women in preventing extremism and combating terrorism. We must establish a climate that is conducive to realizing the aspirations of young people and women, so that they can participate in building their country. This not only safeguards peoples from terrorism and extremism but also builds happy communities, with the goal of achieving development and prosperity. That is why my country has appointed a young female minister to oversee a number of initiatives, including the youth councils, which are aimed at including young people in decision-making processes and allowing their views and aspirations to be known. In the United Arab Emirates, women occupy high positions in the areas of politics and business.

The adoption of national legislation, as well as accession to international treaties and a commitment thereto, is extremely important in our fight against extremism and terrorism. In that regard, the United Arab Emirates has acceded to more than 15 regional and international conventions on counter-terrorism and adopted several national laws on the prosecution of terrorists and addressing the financing of terrorism, while criminalizing acts of religious contempt and hate speech.

My country believes in the importance of coordination at the national, regional and international levels to combat terrorism. That is why it has joined the Global Coalition against Da'esh to help put an end to its activities and prevent it from receiving financial support. The United Arab Emirates is also an active member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum, which plays a leading role in this regard at the international level.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates underscores that it is unacceptable to tolerate terrorism in any of its forms. We must not become complacent towards its perpetrators and supporters. The United Arab Emirates will not cease working with regional and international partners to address extremist and terrorist groups, as we will not allow such groups to undermine the security of our people and of the region. Our main goal remains the restoration of stability in the long-suffering Arab region and to build a more promising future for our young people.

Mr. Ham Sang Wook (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea would first like to align itself with the statement made by the representative of Turkey on behalf of the MIKTA group of countries — Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia (see A/72/PV.101).

We have been witnessing the emergence of new challenges in the global terrorism landscape since the adoption of resolution 70/291, on the fifth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, two years ago. Most notably, foreign terrorist fighters from conflict areas have been returning home, while terrorists are increasingly exploiting new technologies to recruit and finance and to commit terrorist acts.

At the same time, to better address the multifaceted and evolving nature of terrorism, we reached a historic agreement last year to reinforce the United Nations architecture to prevent and counter terrorism by establishing the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. Resolution 72/284, on the sixth review of the Strategy, reflects those recent developments and, in that regard, the Republic of Korea welcomes the adoption of the resolution by consensus. Moreover, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to the co-facilitators, the Ambassadors of Jordan and Finland, and their teams for their able leadership in facilitating the negotiations.

As my delegation pointed out at the outset of the negotiations, we should ensure that this important Strategy is implemented in an effective way so as to better address our common threat. In that regard, we welcome the request made to the Secretary-General that he submit a report on recommendations to assess the impact and progress of the implementation of the Strategy.

In the course of the negotiations, we also came across divergent views on a number of important issues that we deem critical to addressing the global threat of terrorism. In our view, continuing informal dialogues among member States on those issues in the coming months can contribute to minimizing divergences and, in turn, to achieving a stronger Global Strategy in two years' time.

I wish to make two additional points with respect to the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

First, the Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the prevention of violent extremism, which is a central pillar of the Global Strategy. In addition to the hard security measures necessary to immediately combat terrorism, we believe that a broad, long-term approach is equally necessary for the effective prevention of terrorism; such an approach should include addressing conditions that are conducive to terrorism.

However, while pursuing initiatives related to the prevention of violent extremism, we should also pay heed to the countries calling for greater respect for national ownership and also for terrorism and violent extremism not to be associated with any religion, nationality or ethnic group. My delegation believes that that will only help to enhance our mutual trust and collective resolve to jointly tackle this common threat.

The Republic of Korea recently set up a national action plan for the prevention of violent extremism. The plan focuses on developing a whole-of-society approach by encouraging civil society and local communities to actively engage in preventing violent extremism. The plan also aims to empower young people and build their resilience against violent extremism by promoting a sense of identity and belonging. We have also been actively promoting United Nations global citizenship education, which can prevent the spread of violent extremism conducive to terrorism by helping young people to learn the universal values of peace, harmony, tolerance and respect for other cultures and religions.

The Republic of Korea is also committed to helping other Member States build their capacities to prevent terrorism. We recently started making financial contributions to the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to assist Member States in setting up national and regional action plans on preventing violent extremism.

Secondly, in our view, the Office of Counter-Terrorism should play a stronger role in promoting the strategic coordination and coherence of the United Nations response to terrorism. Most importantly, the Office should assist Member States, upon their request, in bolstering their capacities to counter and prevent terrorism by building strong partnerships with regional and international organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society. We look forward to engaging with interested Member States and the Office of Counter-Terrorism in continuously strengthening the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture.

The Republic of Korea has also been working to strengthen regional efforts to counter and prevent terrorism by facilitating interregional and regional dialogues. Last April we convened the Inter-Regional Conference on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism, in close cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to share experiences and good practices between Asia and Europe.

In closing, we wish to thank the Secretary-General for having convened the first United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of

Member States, to be held later this week. We believe that the Conference marks an important start for the United Nations in building stronger partnerships with a diverse range of actors to effectively counter and prevent one of humankind's greatest threats.

Mr. Saikal (Afghanistan): It gives me great pleasure to address the General Assembly on the occasion of the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We join others in thanking the Permanent Representatives of the Kingdom of Jordan and Finland and their teams for their able efforts in facilitating negotiations on resolution 72/284, which we adopted today by consensus (see A/72/PV.101).

We welcome the successful outcome of the process, which reaffirms the imperative of a stronger and more effective global response to defeat international terrorism in the light of the evolving nature of the threat, which has only grown in scope and magnitude worldwide.

For us, the task of countering terrorism is one in which our people have been engaged for more than two decades — even before 2001, when the United Nations adopted a more comprehensive approach to combating this global threat. In that regard, our struggle has persisted on the basis of our national efforts to defend our territorial integrity and sovereignty and enable our people to live a life of dignity, in peace and tranquillity.

Today we continue to struggle, supported by the international community, against terrorist groups that are intent on undermining our democracy, disrupting social stability, destroying our infrastructure and, above all, preventing us from becoming a peaceful and secure country.

Having said that, today we are a proud nation, defending our people and territory against elements of various terrorist groups that have come from outside our country. Our security forces have braved the challenge of fending off those groups in different parts of Afghanistan, at great sacrifice, despite the continued attacks taking place against our people.

Our fight against terrorism constitutes a core element of our nation-building efforts as we continue to build a democratic and prosperous society that is grounded in the rule of law. In the broader context, as the front-line State in the fight against international terrorism, we are making a notable contribution to the security and defence of all peoples and nations around the world.

Outside the battlefield, we are taking persistent measures to implement, in full, the many international counter-terrorism conventions and protocols. To that end, we have broadened and enacted new legislation to capture the full scope of various counter-terrorism instruments. We have updated the criminal code to unify our criminal legislation, which also includes terrorism offences. Our judicial authorities, including the Attorney General's Office, are prosecuting terrorism cases on a continued basis. We have repatriated a number of foreign terrorist fighters from our detention centres to their countries of origin, in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions. We have also taken new measures to counter the financing of terrorism, such as curtailing the illegal flow of currency. The Financial Action Task Force has verified our compliance with international standards related to countering the financing of terrorism.

Our holistic approach to countering terrorism and violent extremism also includes the development of a countering-violent-extremism strategy, built on bottom-up efforts in districts, towns and villages to identify potential sources of radicalization and measures to counter them. Key aspects of the approach include empowering the role of religious figures and institutions to condemn terrorism and violent extremism and to generate confidence in communities by ensuring effective service delivery, on the basis of our national peace and development framework.

Our effort to secure peace for our people is another area in which we are making important investments. If successful, it will have a profound and positive impact on countering terrorism, reducing violence and promoting peacebuilding. We are working closely with regional and international partners, including the United Nations, on that issue and hope to achieve the desired results.

The Global Strategy on which we meet today is the overarching framework for the international fight against terrorism. It complements important counter-terrorism instruments, including international conventions and General Assembly resolutions on the subject. Success in our vital endeavour depends on States meeting their international obligations under international law. We hope that this year's resolution will generate more decisive action in countering terrorism, based on a zero-tolerance approach, as highlighted in the resolution. That also means denying terrorist groups safe havens, freedom of operations, movement and recruitment, and any form of financial, moral and material support.

Likewise, promoting greater understanding and cooperation among different religions and cultures must gain new impetus globally. New attacks in different regions and continents have again proved that terrorism is a threat to human civilization as a whole. Victims of that evil phenomenon are of distinct religious backgrounds, cultures and strata of society.

Moreover, we must not allow lingering regional and international tensions to undermine a more effective global response in combating terrorism. More can and should be done to find solutions to common challenges, including preventing new conflicts and resolving old ones. In short, strengthening the spirit of mutual cooperation in today's global order can only benefit our counter-terrorism efforts.

Victims of terrorism are often left traumatized and demoralized after experiencing the worst one can imagine. We are pleased that this year's resolution has a greater focus on the plight of such victims — people who have been affected physically and emotionally by the evil phenomenon, including the bereaved families of those who have lost their precious lives. Furthermore, the text we have adopted underscores that victims of terrorism must be granted immediate support, in the form of medical, psychological, financial and other forms of assistance. As the initiator of resolution 72/165, entitled "International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism", we hope that the imperative of support to victims will continue to gain proper attention in the work of the United Nations.

We welcome the new emphasis given to the imperative of strengthening the United Nations response in combating terrorism, including its role in helping States to strengthen their operational capacity to address terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. As many have highlighted in the course of this debate, the creation of the Office of Counter-Terrorism in the United Nations provides an opportunity that must be fully utilized. We believe that the new Office can benefit from the experience and human resources of States that have been involved in combating terrorism over an extensive period of time, and that it should also tailor its assistance to the priority needs of concerned States.

Afghanistan welcomes the adoption by consensus of today's resolution, on the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. As ever, we remain a committed partner in the broader effort of implementing the Strategy for the benefit of all our citizens and for a safer and more secure world for current and future generations.

Ms. Pejic (Serbia): At the outset, I wish to thank the two co-facilitators and their teams for their outstanding work and the tremendous efforts that they have put into negotiating resolution 72/284, which we have just adopted (see A/72/PV.101).

The Republic of Serbia aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. I shall now make some additional comments from our national perspective.

Serbia strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including extremism and radicalism. Fighting those phenomena is my country's strategic goal. Having in mind the need for continuous and broad international cooperation in this field, we stand ready to work on the suppression of this modern-day scourge with our partners all over the world. In doing so, we consider the United Nations to be the most important forum for active engagement. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy provides for a comprehensive approach to the suppression of terrorism, and Serbia has invested significant efforts in defining relevant policies and measures and establishing a functional system as a complex and all-embracing response to the threat of terrorism.

The Republic of Serbia strongly supports all General Assembly resolutions on measures to prevent international terrorism, starting with the first (resolution 3034 (XXVII)), adopted in 1972, as well as international efforts aimed at countering this global phenomenon. My country firmly supports the activities and efforts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism. The Committee's follow-up visit to Serbia took place in late March. The visit provided an opportunity to update the Committee's delegation on the activities that Serbia is undertaking in the field of counter-terrorism, including in the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The Committee recognized that Serbia has made considerable efforts to comply with the requirements of relevant Security Council resolutions.

Foreign terrorist fighters, including returnees and those relocating, represent a threat that needs to be addressed not only at the national level, but also through international and regional cooperation. As a sponsor of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014), my country has made significant efforts to counter the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon. Prevention measures have been taken, as have measures to ensure social inclusion, while recognizing the specific threat presented by the phenomenon. Potential indoctrination and recruitment are accorded appropriate attention by the relevant Government agencies.

My country supports the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16, related to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Without that, societies can become fertile ground for the spread of extremism, violence and terrorism.

The Republic of Serbia is actively engaged in international and regional activities aimed at countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism. We stand ready to continue that engagement, within the limits of our capabilities and the resources available to us. We responsibly meet all of our international obligations stemming from the relevant Security Council resolutions.

My country has pursued a number of activities since the last review. One of the most significant steps taken was last year's adoption of the national strategy for the prevention and countering of terrorism, as well as the action plan for its implementation. Serbia's national counter-terrorism strategy provides for the key role of prevention, with a special emphasis on countering violent extremism and radicalization conducive to terrorism. At the same time, we continue to take extensive measures to strengthen the country's institutional capacities to address the threats and challenges encountered in the fight against and suppression of terrorism and extremism, with respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Serbia will continue to make a contribution, in cooperation with partners around the world, to combating terrorism and suppressing threats presented by foreign terrorist fighters at national, regional, European and global levels. Committed and consistent in that endeavour, Serbia intends and vows to make full use of the relevant institutions of the United Nations system.

Mr. Shabaltas (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is in favour of a balanced and integrated approach to countering terrorism, which, in our view, should be reflected in the General Assembly resolution on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review. Faced with a global terrorist threat, we believe it is necessary to rally a broad counter-terrorism coalition within the framework of a genuinely united front of States.

We are firmly convinced that the urgency of combating terrorism should be coupled with a strict observance by States of the principles and norms of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. Unilateral approaches and actions that bypass the United Nations, including on the counter-terrorism track, are illegitimate and counterproductive and weaken the global Organization.

We welcome the creation of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. We have high expectations for it with regard to improving the efficiency of specialized multilateral cooperation and improving the coordination of the many structures of the former Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force.

We support the suppression of any form of support for terrorists — material and technical support, through illegal arms transfers and income from illicit drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings and the smuggling of cultural artefacts; human support, through the recruitment of new followers; and ideological support, through the dissemination of radical ideas using modern information and communication technologies. We welcome the fact that the resolution calls on States to collaborate with a view to implementing Security Council resolution 2354 (2017) and the comprehensive international framework to counter terrorist narratives.

At the same time, we note with regret that several States have supported a shift towards controversial concepts: now, when planning and implementing counter-terrorism measures, greater attention is being paid to the prevention of violent extremism and the role of gender in protecting human rights. We believe that that approach leads to the erosion of full-fledged antiterrorism cooperation and shifts the focus from firmly countering terrorists to positioning them as the suffering victims of undemocratic regimes and in need of external assistance. That, in turn, will lead to criminals being unjustly recategorized as insurgents and fighters against tyranny.

A balanced approach is necessary in the social adaptation and reintegration of terrorists. We believe that such measures must be implemented in conjunction with criminal prosecution, thereby ensuring the applicability of the principle of the inevitability of punishment.

The international community faces the acute problem of foreign terrorist fighters, who, following the military defeat of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, return to their countries of origin and/or residence or move to third countries. We must acknowledge that the trends and dynamics in that area are extremely worrying. Some foreign terrorist fighters have blended in and fallen off the radar of law enforcement, and those who return become autonomous combat and ideological cells of international terrorist organizations. The mechanisms for identification, information-sharing, border security and prosecution are either not fit for purpose or are falling short. We believe that substantial experience-sharing, including through a mechanism for notifying foreign partners about the detention of foreign terrorist fighters, is one of the most effective instruments for combating the phenomenon.

Russia affirms its readiness for closer international cooperation in closing the channels through which foreign terrorist fighters make their way to third countries. We stand ready to energetically, systematically and thoroughly share our counter-terrorism experience bilaterally and through the United Nations and other international organizations.

Mr. Bukoree (Mauritius): At the outset, we wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the progress made in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/72/840). My delegation also wishes to warmly thank and congratulate the co-facilitators — Jordan and Finland — on the adoption earlier today of resolution 72/284 and on their outstanding work and patience in managing to get all parties on board.

I also wish to congratulate the Under-Secretary-General heading the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, on his first year in office and for reaching out to and engaging with Member States in a constructive manner. There is no doubt that the Office of Counter-Terrorism will be called upon to play an even more pivotal role within the United Nations architecture. The Office will certainly help, inter alia, to provide leadership, coordination and coherence to strengthen United Nations counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to Member States and to improve the visibility, advocacy and resource mobilization for United Nations counter-terrorism efforts. In that regard, we must commend the Secretary-General for having had the vision and audacity to produce his proposal for setting up the Office.

The Secretary-General's report underlines the continuing support of the United Nations for Member States in developing and implementing responses to terrorism that take on board all four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It provides a comprehensive overview of the evolving global terrorism landscape, including a description and assessment of current and emerging threats and challenges, such as drones, cyberattacks and chemical and biological attacks and so on. The report further analyses the means to address the deficit in multilateral cooperation by, inter alia, building consensus on global counter-terrorism efforts, enhancing national ownership in devising sustainable policies, improving existing partnerships, as well as the multilateral architecture and legal frameworks for counter-terrorism, and focusing on young people and their protection against all forms of radicalization.

Furthermore, in his report, the Secretary-General called for improvement and depoliticization in the methodology, content and impact of the collective work of Member States, as well as of the United Nations, in order for counter-terrorism efforts to have the desired impact on the ground. He also appealed to Member States for a consensual outcome of the review process of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy:

> "A strong consensus General Assembly resolution will send a resounding message to terrorists everywhere that the world is united in its resolve to defeat this scourge." (*A/72/840, para.84*)

Mauritius is party to several international treaties that contain the obligation to apprehend, prosecute or extradite the perpetrators of terrorist acts. We also wish to underline that our Constitution guarantees and safeguards the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, including the protection of freedom of conscience.

In line with the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Government of Mauritius is constantly enhancing its national counter-terrorism strategy, with particular emphasis on community-bonding, law enforcement and intelligence-gathering, and response and recovery. In that regard, in December 2016 substantive legislative amendments were made to the Prevention of Terrorism Act, in order to provide, inter alia, for the reinforcement of the legal framework against terrorism. Those amendments also cater for issues such as terrorist training, whether inland or overseas, recruitment by terrorist groups, terrorist hoaxes, control orders and special powers of inquiry, as well as the use of technologies for surveillance and intelligence-gathering. Therefore, in line with the Government programme for 2015-2019, the Counter-Terrorism Unit now has the appropriate legal status, which enables it to discharge its functions in more effective and efficient manner, thanks to legislative amendments.

Moreover, in July 2017, the Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism Act was amended to cater for offences related to the financing of terrorism. Strict measures have also been taken by the Government of Mauritius in partnership with financial institutions to counter all illegal and suspicious financial transactions.

Mauritius fully supports all national, regional and international initiatives that help enhance counter-terrorism strategies around the world. Today no country can claim to be immune from the scourge of terrorism, which has become an unprecedented threat to international peace, security and development. Therefore, we remain fully supportive of United Nations-led multilateral initiatives and strongly believe that the Office of Counter-Terrorism can be of great assistance to all Member States.

Mr. Al-Hamadi (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to welcome the adoption of resolution 72/284, on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review. Furthermore, I would like to express our appreciation to the two facilitators, the Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Permanent Representative of Finland, for their efforts during the negotiations.

The current review has given Member States the opportunity to evaluate the best ways to implement the Global Strategy and to update it in order to address the emerging developments and challenges faced by the international community. The resolution adopted today is important as it pertains to strengthening collective action in combating this dangerous scourge and building the capacity of the United Nations system to support Member States in that regard. We welcome the new elements in the resolution, including the provisions on the Secretariat's Office of Counter-Terrorism. We take this opportunity to express our support for the efforts of the Office, led by Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov.

Qatar reiterates its commitment to the implementation of the Global Strategy. We shall fully comply with its commitments under the international instruments and Security Council resolutions pertaining to counter terrorism and its funding. We reconfirm our firm condemnation of terrorism in all its forms wherever and by whomever, regardless of its motives. The State of Qatar is taking effective actions at every level to eradicate terrorism and its root causes, as well as prevent terrorism and violent extremism.

The State of Qatar has adopted a comprehensive approach to combating terrorism, in line with the four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, to address all aspects of this scourge. The State of Qatar is a front-line partner in international efforts to combat terrorism at the military, financial and legal levels. We also focus on strengthening efforts to eradicate the conditions that give rise to terrorism and terrorist groups, such as security vacuums and policies of injustice, tyranny, oppression, marginalization and discrimination. We do so by supporting technical capacities to prevent violent extremism leading to terrorism.

Having recognized the importance of prevention, the State of Qatar has adopted a comprehensive approach to strengthening the culture of peace, tolerance and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions. We host several moderate intellectual centres in the region and encourage freedom of expression and freedom of the press to combat all attempts to use the fight against terrorism as a pretext for political purposes. The State of Qatar also participated in the June 2016 General Assembly meeting on protecting children and youth affected by violent extremism. We have also launched specific initiatives to support education and employment for young people in order to ensure that they are not drawn to extremism and terrorism. A memorandum of understanding was signed between Silatech and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism to provide job opportunities for young people in accordance with the Global Strategy.

Resolution 72/284 stresses the importance of education as a tool to prevent terrorism and violent extremism. I would therefore like to highlight the

Educate a Child programme, launched by the Education Above All Foundation, which recently announced that it had achieved its goal to re-enrol 10 million children in schools around the world. The State of Qatar is one of the founders of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, which attaches particular importance to the prevention of violent extremism. The State of Qatar is considered one of the biggest contributors to this fund.

The resolution underscores the importance of strengthening international and regional cooperation to counter and prevent terrorism. In that regard, the State of Qatar works within the framework of relevant international organizations and platforms, including the Financial Action Group, the International Monetary Fund and the Global Counterterrorism Forum. We are an active member of the Global Coalition against Da'esh. The engagement by the State of Qatar is also visible in its support to the United Nations. For example, we recently supported the study on the link between trafficking in human beings and the financing of terrorism, conducted by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate within the context of implementing Security Council resolution 2331 (2016). We have also signed many conventions and bilateral memorandums of understanding with friendly countries around the world, including the United States, China and France. We believe that eliminating this cross-border scourge requires collective cooperation and efforts.

At the national level, the State of Qatar continues to strengthen national counter-terrorism legislation so that it can meet the emerging challenges, developments and United Nations resolutions on the subject. In addition, we recently adopted a new system for listing terrorists and new rules for identifying terrorists and sources of terrorist funding.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar reiterates its commitment to working with all United Nations counter-terrorism entities and will support them so that they can fully discharge their mandates and help Member States to combat the scourge of terrorism.

Mr. Locsin (Philippines): The Philippines welcomes the adoption by consensus of resolution 72/284, the sixth on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We extend our appreciation to the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Jordan and their teams for their tireless efforts in facilitating the resolution, and we thank the Secretary-General for his report and recommendations (A/72/840).

The Philippines values the Strategy as it advocates the necessity of developing a broad United Nations global counter-terrorism strategy, as shown by its focus on the following aspects.

First, it is broadening counter-terrorism efforts by highlighting the growing nexus between transnational criminal organizations, especially the drug trade, and terrorist groups, as well as by increasing interfaith dialogue.

Secondly, the Stategy seeks to engage more actors — not just States and international and regional organizations, but also private stakeholders, non-partisan non-governmental organizations (NGOs), peaceful religious bodies and youth, who are the most susceptible to terrorist recruitment — to prevent radicalization, to interdict terrorist financing, especially through the drug trade, to stop the enlistment of foreign terrorist fighters and to strengthen legal and financial institutions.

Thirdly, it emphasizes the weaponization of the Internet and social media in terrorist recruitment as integral to the communication of their message of violence and the crowdsourcing of funds. Fourthly, it affirms the importance of human rights and international humanitarian law, so that the fight against terrorism is always carried out effectively, by returning fire but without the careless disregard for human rights that recruits their replacements.

Those issues resonate in my country because of Marawi — a Muslim-majority city in central Mindanao that was attacked in May 2017 by hundreds of men belonging to a Da'esh-inspired terrorist organization called the Maute Group. The attack is arguably the most destructive act of terrorism in my country's history. It caused an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, with around 200,000 persons displaced by the fighting. Fortunately, most were absorbed by the Philippine culture of hospitality.

Peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims is what it has been for centuries. Catholicism's holiest sites are adjacent to Islam's in the capital of Manila and elsewhere; a person's religion is no one's concern but their own. Marawi in particular stood out in that mutually tolerant and harmonious regard, which is why the terrorists chose it to stake out their first presence in my country. Had they succeeded there, they would have better chances elsewhere. They failed. In a textbook-perfect military victory, more than 1,000 of them were killed, to 165 of our brave soldiers.

Marawi illustrates the intimate and symbiotic relationship between terrorism and the illegal drug trade. The poor are not terrorists but are their victims. With drug money, the terrorists were able to gather together a motley assortment of extremists, criminals, mercenaries and foreign fighters to take control of Marawi and re-establish in our part of the world their shattered Middle East caliphate.

The Philippines condemns terrorism anywhere in the world, however inspired, be it by religious madness or individual perversity. We abhor it in all its manifestations, wherever, by whomever, against whomever committed and whatever the excuse. We do not accept poverty as an excuse.

The Philippines addresses violent extremism through a whole-of-nation approach. We engage women, youth, Muslim and Christian leaders and teachers, non-partisan NGOs, academia and the private sector as partners in counter-radicalization and as a collective force for moderation, peace, democracy and development. We raise the security awareness of local communities and implement community awareness. We target radical programmes within the framework of the rule of law and human rights as the fundamental complement of combat in counter-terrorism. We continue to train law-enforcement and security experts to increase their capacity, in partnership with grass-roots connections, to detect and stop threats from homegrown extremists.

Terrorism is an evil so pure it must be countered with means that are sure — a global effort against terror on every front, by every society worthy to be called a society and not a gang. Terrorism is a global problem no country can tackle alone. President Rodrigo Duterte understands that. Counter-terrorism is a cornerstone of his national agenda, and that includes strengthening cooperation with our regional partners, especially Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as Australia and the United States, so that the Philippines can have a more effective defence system to crush terrorism when it will not be deterred.

The fight against terrorism should unite us all. Foreign terrorist operations do not recognize borders, and the complexity and reach of the threat they pose have expanded. Every civilized society they destroy is a platform for the destruction of another. To put a stop to them, Member States must work together. International cooperation must cover the whole range of the counter-terrorism spectrum, from border control to countering the narratives of violent extremism, always with the objective of fighting it flat out.

That is what the Strategy provides. For the Strategy to be effective, the United Nations and its institutional architecture must not be just comprehensive, but coherent and coordinated and not waste time talking. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism must work closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, always ensuring respect for national ownership and national priorities. No one can know better than a country how its particular terrorist threat must be addressed. That is one area where there are no experts outside those who are fighting it in country.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia): The scourge of terrorism continues to pose a real threat to international peace and security. Deadly daily plots and attacks remind us how important it is to remain united, coherent and committed to building resilient societies and enhancing international cooperation. Our experience shows us that no country is immune to or protected from this global threat.

Today, as we are reviewing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, it is our aim to take stock of the development of the threat of terrorism over two years. In that regard, the role of the United Nations is essential as a platform of discussion and as a provider of guidance and capacity-building to Member States. We extend our thanks and gratitude to the Ambassadors of Jordan and Finland, co-facilitators, and their teams for their tireless efforts and their resolve to lead us to the consensual adoption of resolution 72/284, as well as to the Secretariat for the clarification provided through the negotiating process.

Tunisia attaches great importance to the balanced implementation of the Strategy across its four pillars and will remain committed to keeping the Global Strategy a fit-for-purpose instrument and ensure its full implementation. While we acknowledge with appreciation the consensual adoption of the resolution as a reasonable way forward for the Strategy, my delegation would like to highlight some points.

First, terrorism is a global threat that is fundamentally and ultimately best addressed at the regional level. There are linkages between transnational organized crime and terrorism, and they deserve to be incorporated into the text of the resolution. It is unfortunate that the growing concerns expressed by Member States regarding that phenomenon and the action-oriented proposals that were elaborated to enhance the role of Member States and international non-governmental organizations were not reflected, especially given that the fifth review resolution mirrored that issue poorly. Regional actions are key to preventing the spread of that phenomenon. A contextualized answer is essential for an effective response.

Secondly, whole-of-Government and whole-of-society policies to tackle the threat of terrorism and promote the participation of communities and civil society in strengthening prevention agendas are essential for comprehensive national policies. The critical role of women in that endeavour is undeniable. Hence, we wished to have further references to the efforts that should be devoted to coming up with a gender-sensitive approach by deploying more concerted efforts to mainstream gender throughout the United Nation system and to build thecapacities of Member States to advance their role in the fight against terrorism.

Thirdly, since the 2016 review, the threat has not diminished. Mindful of the situation, we commend the adoption of the paragraphs that mirror Member States' concern with regard to the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, returnees and relocators and the use of technology for terrorist purposes and counter-narratives, while we continue upholding our obligation enshrined in different international legal instruments, including human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law.

Fourthly, leveraging the importance of technical assistance for Member States upon their request is one of the key elements to further advance national systems that would ultimately strengthen the international response in tackling terrorism and promoting the prevention of violent extremism, as and when conducive to terrorism agendas.

Fifthly, my delegation looks forward to periodic detailed briefings to be provided by Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov regarding progress made in the implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, which we welcome with appreciation, including the matrix of projects conducted under its umbrella.

My delegation actively supported the establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism. It was time to enshrine a whole-of-United Nations approach through the action of one Office dedicated to bringing more coherence and transparency to the United Nations activities in countering and preventing terrorism. We look forward to the high-level meeting of heads of intelligence agencies for constructive discussions and thorough exchanges. It is, indeed, practical action that will galvanize the membership commitments in the global fight against terrorism.

Mr. Shutenko (Ukraine): While I fully align myself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union, I would like to make the following comments on the subject.

At the outset, let me join previous speakers in commending the dedicated efforts of Jordan and Finland, as co-facilitators of the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, to produce the best deal possible for reaching consensus on the matter. We welcome today's adoption of resolution 72/284, which reflects the recent developments in fostering the counter-terrorism architecture and offers ways to enhance the implementation of Member States' obligations under all four pillars of the Strategy. At the same time, we note that despite intensive negotiations, a number of important elements — in particular related to the engagement of civil society and the role of women and youth in counter-terrorism efforts — were partially included in the document at the end.

To date, the Strategy remains a milestone framework for international efforts in the field of countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including through tackling the root causes and conditions conducive to the spread of this phenomenon.

Terrorism and violent extremism have become major challenges to international peace and security, threatening our core values and principles, including human rights, the rule of law, democracy, equal opportunity and freedom. The sixth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is taking place against the backdrop of the continuously evolving threats and trends in international terrorism. Moreover, there have been several confirmed cases of the use of chemical weapons by the Islamic State in Iraq and the

Sham, which means that terrorists acquiring a weapon of mass destruction is no longer a hypothetical scenario.

On the other hand, the current momentum is also an opportunity to take stock of all the achievements and new counter-terrorism tools that were developed in 2016 and 2017. It is fitting that during the past two years such issues as combating the financing of terrorism, depriving terrorists of weapons and supplies, preventing violent extremism, the return of foreign terrorist fighters from conflict zones, suppressing terrorist propaganda, protecting critical infrastructure and strengthening aviation security, to name but a few, have been put high on the global agenda. In addition, since the fifth review of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the reform process of the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture has been launched with a view to enhancing coordination and coherence among the relevant entities.

In today's resolution, we reconfirmed once again our respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and unity of all States, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We urge all Member States to fully observe those fundamental principles and to follow their commitments under the Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

We also reaffirmed that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomever committed. In that regard, combating the growing proliferation of State-sponsored terrorism is essential for the success of the global counter-terrorism efforts.

I cannot but mention that this particular issue continues to be of high importance for my country. For more than four years, a broad range of hybrid warfare techniques have been employed to promote the ideology of the so-called Russian world, which implies an exclusive role for the Russian Federation in the internal affairs of a number of sovereign States, including Ukraine. The Russian ideology not only tolerates but encourages the violation of international law and perpetration of the most serious crimes, including terrorist acts. Fierce, deceitful propaganda disseminated by the State-controlled Russian media is one of the key elements of the ongoing hybrid aggression against my country.

Guided by that ideology, as well as under the direct support of Russia, deadly terrorist attacks have been carried out in many Ukrainian cities. The shocking reality is that foreign terrorist fighters, primarily from the aggressor State, constitute a significant part of the approximately 40,000-strong illegal armed groups fighting against the Government of Ukraine in Donbass.

The reports of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine confirm the continuous inflow of ammunition, weaponry and fighters from the Russian Federation into the occupied territories of Ukraine. Moreover, the Russian media and nationalist circles glorify Russian terrorist fighters as they depart for Ukraine and return, instead of calling for their prosecution.

I wish to recall that on 24 May the Joint Investigation Team examining the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 determined that the Buk missile system, which downed the civilian plane, was transferred to illegal armed groups in the Donetsk region of Ukraine by the Russian 53rd anti-aircraft military brigade through the uncontrolled segment of the State border.

With that and other Russian support, those groups attacked Flight MH-17, taking nearly 300 innocent lives. They unleashed deadly barrages of rocket fire on Ukrainian cities, including the assaults on a checkpoint near Volnovakha and residential neighbourhoods in Kramatorsk, Mariupol and Avdiivka, and they planted bombs that ripped through patriotic marches, popular public places and other peaceful locations.

Those terrible terrorist acts and all crimes against humanity must be resolutely condemned and punished. The sanctions imposed on the aggressor State should be maintained and strengthened, and the perpetrators brought to justice. Therefore, on 12 June, Ukraine submitted its memorial to the International Court of Justice documenting serious violations of international law by the Russian Federation. In our memorial, we demanded that Russia cease its violations of the Terrorist Financing Convention and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that in recent decades the international community has made remarkable achievements in adopting legally binding instruments on countering terrorism. However, more should be done to ensure their full and uncompromising implementation and to end impunity for blatant violations of international law.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its profound gratitude to the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Jordan for leading a fair and transparent consultative process for the review of the United National Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We congratulate them on the consensual adoption of resolution 72/284 today. We also appreciate the constructive spirit with which delegations approached the negotiations. Indeed, the twelfth anniversary of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy demanded a strong and united message against terrorism. It is gratifying that we were able to deliver one.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (see A/72/PV.101).

The resolution we adopted today does not by any means end our journey; it is but a milestone. We have a long way to go. The scourge of terrorism continues to morph, and among the many security threats endangering global security, it continues to be the most complex and the most imposing challenge of our times. The updated Strategy underscores our collective determination to continue to pursue our recommendations across the four pillars of the Strategy.

My country condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reaffirms its unequivocal commitment to fighting this battle, whatever the cost. My country has already made enormous sacrifices in this battle, sacrifices that we know are not in vain. That commitment was also reflected in the constructive spirit with which my delegation engaged in the review process. It is also the reason we joined the consensus on the resolution today.

We will continue to strive to strengthen our joint commitment to address the conditions conducive to terrorism, including the internal and external drivers of terrorism, in a balanced manner. It is therefore critical that Member States reaffirm their determination to address some of the most pervasive root causes of terrorism, including the resolution of conflicts, both long-standing, protracted ones and newer ones. That means addressing issues such as ending foreign occupation; allowing for the exercise of the right to self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations; eliminating all forms of discrimination, including xenophobia and Islamophobia; and discouraging and deterring unilateral measures that violate the Charter.

The resolution we have adopted today clearly notes that when counter-terrorism efforts sidestep the rule of law at the national and international levels and violate international law, including the Charter, international humanitarian law and fundamental freedoms, they not only betray the values they seek to uphold, but can also end up fuelling terrorism.

Another important issue that remained at the core of the discussions this year was the concept of preventing violent extremism. Two years ago, when the General Assembly unanimously agreed to implement measures to curb what at that time was deemed the new phenomenon of violent extremism, it was expected that with time we would be able to remove the confusion about what exactly that entailed. However, during this period we witnessed new programmes and mandates generated under the pretext of preventing violent extremism that seek to reform and reconstruct societies. That approach, though tempting for some, needs to be more thoroughly evaluated — or rather, re-evaluated. We have all agreed to implement measures to prevent terrorism, but States have the sovereign right to evolve and take preventive measures, based on their local conditions and priorities.

As the 2016 report of the Secretary-General on preventing violent extremism (A/70/674) notes, our understanding of violent extremism has been shaped by our experiences of dealing with terrorism, and that varies widely. With that in mind, Pakistan proposed ideas to clarify the concept of violent extremism. While those ideas were supported by many delegations, it is unfortunate that we were not able to achieve the desired progress.

Few countries can match the national efforts of my country in countering terrorism. Fewer still can match our sacrifices. Our law-enforcement operations have achieved significant, even dramatic, results by those efforts. As a consequence, terrorist incidents in Pakistan are now at their lowest compared with any point over the last decade. Simultaneously, we have also organized our efforts into a national action plan to counter terrorism. Each action point is coordinated by a ministerial-level committee. Recently, Pakistan announced a comprehensive national counter-extremism policy, which seeks to introduce preventive measures with a whole-of-society and a whole-of-Government approach.

Last year, religious scholars, or ulema, in my country issued a religious edict, or fatwa, condemning terrorism and particularly condemning suicide bombings anywhere in the world. Our actions regarding the promotion and protection of women's rights, special emphasis on harnessing the potential of youth, education reforms, capacity-building of our law-enforcement agencies, economic development programmes and special assistance packages for victims of terrorism are fully aligned with the United National Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

In conclusion, I wish to state that, based on our valuable experience in the counter-terrorism domain, we look forward to partnering with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to find avenues to share our experiences and best practices with other Member States. We believe such partnerships will contribute constructively toenhancing the capability of the United Nations system to better meet the expectations of Member States.

Finally, let me assure the Assembly of Pakistan's continued and tireless efforts to counter and prevent terrorism and of our constructive engagement with Member States to further refine the consensual normative framework on countering terrorism.

Mr. Zhang Dianbin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the Assembly's adoption by consensus at its seventy-second session of resolution 72/284, on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy review. We thank the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Finland, and their teams for their tireless efforts, and the Secretariat and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism for their firm support. Based on a broad consensus among Member States in the spirit of supporting counter-terrorism, the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is extremely important. China participated actively in the consultations on the resolution on the sixth review and supported and facilitated the resolution's adoption by consensus.

Terrorism continues to pose major threats and unprecedented challenges to international peace, security and development. No country is immune to its challenges or able to tackle them alone. The international community should therefore foster a sense of a shared future for humankind while working together to forge consensus and counter terrorism, humankind's shared public enemy. With regard to the further balanced implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, China believes that we should uphold the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and our shared norms on terrorism, and support the central coordinating role that the United Nations plays and the principle of country leadership. We should accord preventing and countering terrorism equal importance; focus on enhancing capacity-building and counter-terrorism for Member States, especially developing countries; embrace and practice the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security; and maintain an international environment characterized by peace, stability and sustainable development with a view to eradicating breeding grounds for terrorism.

China will continue to advance and participate actively in international cooperation in connection with counter-terrorism and will further implement the Strategy and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. China stands ready to work with all other countries to tackle the threats posed by terrorism and maintain world peace and stability.

Mr. Iglesias Mori (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile joins others in supporting the Assembly's adoption of resolution 72/284, on the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We would like to take this opportunity to affirm our unwavering commitment to the Strategy and its four pillars and reiterate our firm condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, wherever and by whomever committed and regardless of motive. We would like to thank the co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Finland and Jordan, as well as their teams and the coordinators of the thematic subgroups, for their dedication, patience and hard work, all of which have enabled us to come up with a comprehensive, consensus text that sends a clear message from the international community against terrorism, a problem that is a threat to the fundamental values of every civilization and culture and therefore to international peace and security.

For my country, protecting human rights is an essential element in the fight against terrorism. We believe that all efforts and measures by Member States in this area must always comply with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law and the rule of law. The rapid and ongoing evolution of violent extremism and terrorism compels us to renew our commitment to the Global Strategy and adapt it to current needs and trends every two years. At the same time, we must always reaffirm the basic principles governing the fight against this scourge — to which Chile fully subscribes — such as the belief that terrorism cannot be associated with a particular religion, nationality or ethnic group; the importance of international cooperation in improving States' capacity to implement the Strategy; and the participation of civil society, the private sector and various specific sectors of society, such as women and young people, whose participation is essential to ensuring a multidimensional approach to this work. In that context, we should highlight the progress tht has been made in involving women in the Strategy's implementation. The gender perspective is a vital and cross-cutting ingredient in addressing the socioeconomic conditions that foster radicalization and acts of violent extremism.

Chile favours preventive measures for combating terrorism, and we therefore encourage efforts to counter violent extremism as a strategy for addressing the underlying causes of terrorism and preventing radicalization, especially of young people. Given its cross-cutting nature, the prevention of violent extremism spans the four pillars of the Global Strategy and contributes to their balanced implementation. In that regard, we support the work of Jordan and Norway as co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Preventing Violent Extremism, in our firm belief in the link between violent extremism and terrorism and its consequences for global security. Chile supports the initiatives set out in resolution 72/284 aimed at providing United Nations counter-terrorism agencies, especially the Office for Counter-Terrorism, with resources adequate to the enforcement of its mandate and to helping Member States fully implement the Strategy in a balanced way. Ensuring the Office's coherence with the rest of the system should be central to our collective efforts to address terrorism based on the three pillars of the United Nations — international peace and security, sustainable development and full respect for human rights.

Lastly, we urge all States to redouble their efforts to implement the Strategy and enforce the Security Council's sanctions on Da'esh, Al-Qaida and the Taliban, which are a complementary and essential part of the work of the international community to stop the financing of terrorist groups and prevent acts that would threaten international peace and security.

Mr. Tang (Singapore): On behalf of Singapore, I am pleased to address the General Assembly on agenda item 118, on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/72/840) on the issue. We would also like to thank Ambassadors Kai Sauer and Sima Sami Bahous and their teams for their excellent work in co-facilitating the sixth review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In particular, we thank them for their efforts to reach out to delegations in the course of the consultations, which were conducted in an open and inclusive manner. We also wish to put on record our appreciation to the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism for its assistance and support throughout consultations.

The scourge of terrorism remains a serious and persistent threat to global peace and security and is one of the most profound challenges of our time. No country is immune to it, and no country can address that challenge alone. My delegation therefore reaffirms the importance of the Strategy as a unique global instrument that enhances national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. We would like to make five points on the occasion of this sixth review of the Strategy.

First, Singapore is pleased that this year's version of the resolution on the Strategy has once again been adopted by consensus, as resolution 72/284. It will be critical to ensure that the United Nations sends a clear and unified message of its collective resolve to address this global threat. We need a strong, sustained and coordinated global response to combat terrorism. While each country must do its part in that fight, taking into account its local context and national legal framework, a concerted and coordinated approach is important to ensure that there are no gaps in our efforts.

Secondly, we emphasize the need for the resolution to continue to give equal recognition to all four pillars of the Strategy, in line with the fact that the Strategy must be implemented in an integrated and balanced manner in all its aspects.

Thirdly, we welcome the new language in the resolution on foreign terrorist fighters. Even when terrorist groups are territorially defeated, their ideological roots can remain pervasive, and the issue of returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters is a global problem that requires greater and more effective international cooperation. In particular, we need to continue to share intelligence, best practices and lessons learned.

That brings me to my fourth point, which is to welcome the first United Nations high-level conference of heads of counter-terrorism agencies of Member States, to be held in New York on 28 and 29 June. It is an excellent opportunity for such agencies to forge new partnerships, which can help to improve the communication channels through which critical information can be exchanged in a timely and secure manner.

Finally, I would like to end by emphasizing the importance of a strong community response as the first line of defence. Terrorism cannot be defeated by Government efforts alone. Rather, a whole-of-society approach in countering violent extremism and terrorism is required. For that reason, Singapore has established its SGSecure movement to sensitize, train and mobilize our community in the fight against terror. We continue to work hand in hand with religious and interfaith organizations to counteract the spread of extremist ideologies, including through deradicalization programmes for rehabilitating and counselling individuals indoctrinated by radical ideology.

Singapore reaffirms its commitment to the fight against terrorism. We firmly believe that this latest review of the Strategy will strengthen the global response against a serious and evolving threat.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. We will hear the remaining speakers tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. in this Hall.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.